

## First things first you get what you deserve

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# First things first you get what you deserve

by [trying\\_to\\_spell\\_both\\_our\\_names\\_at\\_once](#)

## Summary

Tommy stumbled through the snow, ears ringing and body aching. He hadn't expected Dream to be that mad. He definitely wasn't expecting Dream to blow everything up. Right now all he expected and wanted to do was go steal all of his older brother's shit and maybe find a way to get back home along the way.

What he didn't expect was to wake up frozen in the tundra without his hearing. What Techno didn't expect was to suddenly be dealing with his deaf younger brother who refused to tell him anything about what happened to him.

The world works in funny and cruel ways.

## Notes

This idea's been bouncing around my head for way too long guys. I thought about the possibility of Tommy having hearing loss from all the explosions Dream put him through in exile and everything else took over. This is also me maniacally clutching onto my broken Techno and Tommy dynamic for dear life. Hope you enjoy.

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

## **It began when I learn how to face myself**

Tommy wonders how many explosions one person can live through before they snap. He's guessing he's close to the limit.

He thinks about when explosions were fun pranks to pull on the server, Tubbo and him running around and exploding creepers to piss people off, planting TNT as a fun trap for some poor victim. When the echoing boom was nothing more than a trick pulled right and Tubbo would lean against him, giggling and smiling so hard it looked painful.

Then there was the destruction of L'Manburg, where the risk of genuinely dying from them suddenly became a reality, and everything he knew was suddenly nothing but sulfur and the taste of ash on his tongue. He remembers screaming Tubbo's name and jumping towards the bright fireworks, seeing the fear and pain in his best friend's eyes as the boom of explosives exploded around them. Then explosions became something Wilbur rambled about, eyes alight with paranoia as he talked about blowing it all up. And then he did. Tommy remembers stumbling through the wreckage of the place he loved and hearing the roar of withers following him. Explosions became a symbol of betrayal, a reminder that those he loved did not love him enough to set down the flint and steel.

And now he was in exile, and everything was completely shitty in every way. The explosions were a bit of a comfort, if he was being honest. A constant throughout everything else.

He doesn't know what's going to happen. He doesn't know if he'll ever be allowed home. He isn't sure when Dream will hurt him next or if anyone will come and pull him out of his loneliness. But he knows that every time Dream shows up, a piece of TNT will destroy everything Tommy has on him. And it sucks. But that's alright. He's alright. He'll take whatever he can get.

This though? This wasn't a comfort. Nothing about this was comforting, nothing about this was okay.

Tommy shouldn't have been such an idiot. Hiding things from Dream was such a stupid idea. He never should have had it in the first place.

Dream was a constant. Tommy thought a lot of things were constants. Tubbo, Wilbur, his discs, L'Manburg. They were all supposed to be constants too. They weren't.

Dream had been though, he had shown up three times every single week, visiting and taunting him, but also sometimes being a friend. Dream was a friend. Or maybe he used to be, because he was kind of pissed right now.

Tommy's ears were ringing like they always did, and he knew this song and dance.

The explosions would happen, his ears would ring, his mouth would fill with the taste of ash, gunpowder would burn his nostrils. He would get a headache for a couple of days, and then it would fade until it happened again.

Dream went towards his tent, and Tommy's mind flashed towards his ender chest, all of his valuables tucked neatly inside, hidden from the rest of the world.

Panic raced through him. He had (sorta) worked hard for that, and the thought of it getting destroyed sent his heart racing as he ran to catch up with Dream, apologies falling from his lips. He was rambling, the words barely registering in his mind as he tried in vain to stop Dream from destroying the only things he had left.

Dream was completely deaf to his pleas. Tommy couldn't see his face, and he wasn't talking either. Tommy had no idea what he was thinking, no idea how to get out of this one.

Tommy watched as everything he owned, everything he had worked for over these past few months burned around him. Dream placed the TNT in his tent and Tommy saw red. He wasn't even fully aware of what he was doing, darting forwards and hoping to pick something up and save it.

"My ender-" He screamed, darting forwards and reaching for it. The TNT went off before he could grab it, the echoing boom filling his ears as pieces of wood and rock collided against him, piercing his skin. The echoing noise rattled through his head, a searing pain and a popping noise accompanying it as Tommy fell to the ground, clothes smoking and a persistent, angry ringing sound filling his ears.

Everything was moving slowly, sounds distorting and shifting inside his ears, the high ringing noise raising in volume, blocking everything else out. Dream hadn't even noticed his predicament, storming towards what remained of Logstedshire, more dynamite in his hands. Tommy was sure he was grinning behind that stupid mask.

Tommy stumbled to his feet to go after him, his limbs starting to protest the movement. He batted at the small embers burning at his skin, hissing with pain as tears starting to well in his eyes.

No. He refused to cry. He wouldn't cry. There was a pressure building up inside his head, like a band wrapping around his head and slowly squeezing.

"Tommy," Dream's voice cut through the noise. It sounded like he was speaking underwater and Tommy stared at him, watching as he stormed towards all that Tommy had left. "It's time for you to start over. You know, I thought we were friends."

"We are friends," Tommy protests immediately, stumbling a bit as his world tilts. "We are! You're my- you're my best friend Dream."

Everything got so out of hand, everything was going so wrong. Tommy felt like screaming, he felt like crying. The pressure in his head was increasing and he shook his head, wincing when that only made things worse. Dream's voice cut out, lost through the static and the cotton that was filling his head.

"-in a chest, knowing they were things I wouldn't want you to have. And you hid it in a way that I would never find it," Dream's voice filters back in faintly and Tommy strains to hear it. He needs to listen, needs to find a way to make this better. "Tommy? Come here. Watch this."

Dream marches into the building as Tommy scrambles to catch up. He watches as Dream pulls out his sword, and a protest isn't even able to fall out of his mouth before Dream is stabbing Mushroom Henry, pulling the bloody sword out and showing no reaction as the animal falls to the fall, not able to even utter a single moo before the slaughter. Tommy gasps, staring in horror.

He was never attached to the cow, mostly because it was a cheap imitation of his beloved pet from earlier and served no purpose past a source of food, but it was still an animal. It had a name, and it always bumped his head against Tommy's chest whenever he went near, and he didn't even do anything! He was just spinning and shit.

"I'm sorry," Tommy says, trying not to sob. He has to keep it together; he can still manage to salvage this. He pushes Mushroom Henry out of his mind, tearing his eyes away as Dream storms into the little house. If he thinks too hard he'll start crying and Dream hates it when he cries. "Can't we just talk about this?"

"No, Tommy we can't," Dream shakes his head, and before Tommy can even blink another piece of TNT is going off, pushing him back as more pieces of shrapnel pierced his skin. The ringing gets louder and Tommy curls into himself, stumbling away and placing hands over his ears, squeezing his eyes shut as they start to burn from the ashy air. He struggles to breathe past the ash and soot in the air as Dream explodes more TNT everywhere, sporadically placing them as Tommy tries to get away, every single echoing boom sending bolts of intense pain through his head.

He stumbles outside the broken structure, tears obstructing his vision as much as the ash and soot flying through the air. Everything was gone. There was nothing remaining except a few measly stumps of logs that were smoldering or on fire. Everything else was just a pit. The pressure was getting worse, as was the ringing. Tommy was scared to think about what that meant. He was starting to feel lightheaded, and he could feel warm blood dripping from his arms and torso where small bits of debris was lodged into his skin.

"I'll let you have this one thing," Dream said softly, throwing the jukebox down at his feet. Tommy reached forwards for it with shaking hands. "Everything else goes in the pit."

"Yeah sure," Tommy said, voice wobbling and sounding weak and faint to his own ears. But everything was faint to him at the moment, the ringing tinnitus almost blocking everything else out. He shakily tosses everything into the hole Dream dug. Well, almost everything. His pictures stayed firmly in his pockets, shoved down so Dream wouldn't see them. He couldn't lose those, the last few good memories that he still held.

"Tommy? Don't do that again. There was a reason I exiled you, why Tubbo exiled you-" The sound fades out again, like turning down the volume dials on his jukebox. Tommy shakes his head, hoping to get the sound back, and it helps a bit but Dream's voice sounds faded, almost impossible to hear over the ringing and the cotton. Tommy sucks in a breath, a panic that had been fuelling him this entire time spiking with every rise and fall of the sound.

He thinks Dream continues talking. He can faintly hear him, but it's more just the faint wisps of his voice, nothing that Tommy can grab a hold of and focus on. The pain and blood loss was making everything a bit fuzzy.

“Listen,” Dream steps forwards, the closeness helping Tommy focus. “I’ll leave you here to think.”

“What about my friends?” Tommy asked, eyes darting weakly to the broken portal.

“No, you can’t go to the nether, no one can come here. You are alone,” Tommy hears a loud pop and suddenly Dream’s voice was very loud, causing him to flinch and step back. Dream took that as encouragement and stepped forwards, a tiny bit of amusement entering his voice. “As soon as I think you have changed and become someone who I think won’t try and lie and hide and revolt, then they can come visit you again, you can go to the nether again. But for now? No one can come and you can’t go to the nether. I’ve been very lenient with you.”

Tommy stares at the ground, everything blurring in front of his eyes. Dream was right. He ruined everything. All he had to do was shut up and sit down, and he didn’t, and now he was paying the price. He was alone.

“I have been nothing but gracious to you, Tommy,” Dream’s voice was soft, but startlingly clear as the ringing started back up again, this time twice as loud as the pressure inside his head reached an unbearable level. He thinks he lets out a pathetic sounding whine. “Think about what you did.”

With that Dream turned and left him there.

Tommy falls to his knees, barely wincing at the minuscule pain. Everything hurt, an unbearable feeling that coated his entire skin. The ringing was loud and persistent, and everything else sounded like it was coming through cotton. He raised his hands up to his ears, wincing as his hands came back wet with sticky red blood.

Not good. None of this was good. He needed help. He wasn’t sure what was wrong, other than literally everything, but the only thing that was clear in his addled mind was that if he didn’t get help soon, it was likely he would die from his injuries. There was just too much for him to lie down and pretend everything was fine. Without any potions or treatment he would probably get an infection and die. He ignores the little voice that tells him that maybe that wasn’t as big of a deal as he was making it out to be.

His shoulder was aching more than anything else, and when he looked over at it he could see a particularly nasty shard of metal sticking through his skin. He thinks it’s from the anvil that cracked during the explosion. Little splintered pieces of wood stuck out of multiple places on his body and he was covered in soot, dirt, and blood. His head felt weird, and his thoughts were starting to spin.

Everything was hard to focus on, so he grasped onto one thought and held onto it. Help.

He couldn’t go back to L’Manburg. It was too far and he doesn’t think he’d last long enough to travel through anything other than the nether portal, which was helplessly broken at the moment. And he wasn’t welcomed there. If he went it was almost certain death. So his mind whirled to the only other option.

Technoblade was near here, wasn't he? He would have a shit ton of things for him to steal and take. Techno was a paranoid bastard, Tommy was sure he'd have tons of health and regeneration potions for Tommy to steal, as well as other supplies that Tommy can take and hoard in order to build himself back up.

He can do this. He'll go, steal from that fucking pig, and then he'll figure it out from there. That's a good plan. He likes that plan. He was so fucking smart.

He pushes himself up to his feet, swaying dangerously at the action. He grits his teeth and forces himself to get moving. Every little action hurt, but he pushed the pain aside, focusing on putting one foot in front of the other. He knows the general direction of the house and stumbles that way, wrapping his arms around himself and taking deep breathes.

The small minuscule pain all over his body was driving him insane, building up as he reaches the snow, the cold digging into his skin. It's getting hard to breathe and Tommy just focusses on moving. If he can do this, just keep soldiering on, then he will reach Techno's and everything will be okay.

He starts to drift, all his focus going towards just walking through the deep snow as he removes himself from everything else, his entire body going numb from the cold. The ringing and the pressure around his head was getting softer, which was a relief.

He blinks and everything tilts, the sun suddenly halfway through the sky and his surroundings changing. He's still moving, slowly trudging through the snow. It's getting harder to move, his limbs shaking with the cold as the temperature dropped. He no longer had a shoe, and his other one was soaked through. His measly little tee-shirt did next to nothing to protect against the cold, especially as ripped and ruined as it was. His ears were completely numb and tears froze to his eyelashes.

He felt like a fucking walking icicle. The freezing temperature had numbed him to the bone, the cold weighing down his limbs as he struggled to keep moving. It was hard to breathe, the biting cold wind filling his lungs and grating against his throat so much it burned with every intake. He should have been there by now, was he lost? Fuck he was so lost. He was going to die out here in this miserable next cold and it fucking sucked. He stumbled a bit to the side, hitting a sheet of ice and then he was crashing into the ground, the snow doing very little to soften the fall.

He doesn't want to move. Everything was nicer down here, the cold numbing all the pain. His limbs were so heavy, as if they had turned into giant ice blocks. The sun was going down. He should be concerned over that, but he was struggling to care. The pressure in his head made it feel like it was going to explode. He thinks that would be funny, his head just popping like a berry.

He lies in the snow and laughs about it, the sound muted and distorted. He doesn't want to think about that. Everything was so fucking cold. He just needed to rest a moment. Just a second of relaxation, then he'd be up and moving again. He'll just close his eyes for a moment.



He blinks and suddenly there's nothing. Everything slipping away as his shivers started to slow down.

He wakes up what feels like hours later but could've just been minutes for all he knew, the sun dipping below the sky. He wasn't really that cold anymore. The blood from his wounds had frozen to his skin and the pain was just a dull throb now. More bearable than it was before. Everything was muted and cold.

And best of all, the ringing in his ears was finally gone. Now there was nothing but blissful, beautiful silence. God, so much better than all that fucking ringing.

It was weirdly silent in the tundra. Tommy knew he wasn't thinking right, he knows that he should be moving and the fact that he was no longer cold or hurting as much was a really bad sign, but all he could note was the silence. He would think he'd be able to hear some animals or something, but there wasn't anything there. Not like when he was sitting on the beach, the constant lap of the water grating on his ears.

He let's out a half-crazed giggle, shoulders shaking with the movement as he runs a shaky hand down his face. God, it was so quiet he couldn't even hear himself laugh.

Wait a minute. What?

Panic suddenly bolts through his half-conscious mind, and he struggles to sit up, aching fingers digging into the snow to move his unresponsive body to his knees, everything protesting the movement. His chest was suddenly very heavy as he struggled to breathe in desperate little pants. He couldn't hear it. Why couldn't he hear himself breathe?

"Fuck," He whispers. He feels his mouth move, puts the right effort into the words and he knows he's making noise, but nothing registers in his ears.

He can't hear. Holy fuck he can't hear. No, no, no, no, no.

This was bad, this was really bad. His hands reach up to scrape at his ears, but they're numb to the touch and all he can feel is the dried trail of blood leaking down from them.

"Hello?" He calls out, his voice loud and booming. Maybe. He hears none of it. He's naturally loud, it's a talent, but he can't even himself talking. What was wrong with him?  
"Hello?"

He's panicking now, air suddenly hard to take in and a hand scratches at his chest, eyes blown wide with panic.

He can't hear. He was fucking deaf or some shit. God, the explosions must have messed something up. This wasn't okay, this wasn't supposed to happen. He can't hear. He can't hear! HE CAN'T HEAR!

He opens his mouth and screams.

It's a painful scream, one that scratches his throat and he can feel the air exhaling from his mouth, and yet he still can't hear a thing. Not even the faintest protest filters through the

block and tears are now racing down his cheeks as he screams, hands pounding at his chest.

No noise filters through. There's nothing but that mocking oppressive silence that's mocked him for ages in exile. Back then it was his only companion. Now it seems like it forever will be all he has.

He falls to the side again, his screams tapering into sobs as he lies in the snow, staring at the stars with wide eyes. He doesn't know what's happening, he isn't sure what's going on. Night had fallen, he was sure mobs would be crawling his way and he can't even hear them coming.

He was going to die like this, freezing, injured, and fucking deaf.

His eyes fall closed, and he lets out a breath, hands cupping his ears as he curls into himself, making himself as small as possible.

It's there that he passes out again, lying prone in the snow as night falls.

# I'm still deciding if I'm something else

## Chapter Summary

The last thing Techno was expecting to hear as he made himself dinner was loud screaming from outside.

## Chapter Notes

I have never written Techno before and ngl it's kind of fun but also very stressful lol. Thank you all for the support on the last chapter and I hope you guys enjoy!! <3

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

If Techno was being completely honest, retirement was a bit boring. He was enjoying it, really he was, but there wasn't really much for him to do. He liked the farming thing, the movements were familiar and calming, and his turtle and bee farm gave him some really cool stuff, so he enjoyed tending to that too.

Overall, life in the Arctic was pretty boring. His days consisted of waking up, making himself food, tending to his farms, and then just sitting around all day either reading or training. Maybe it was a bit too boring sometimes, especially when Phil wasn't around. So maybe once in a while he'd pop into the nether and get some soul sand and skulls just in case, just as a precaution. He never knew when he'd get too bored of the whole peaceful living thing.

So whenever Phil wasn't around, his life was pretty much the exact same. Nothing ever changed, and that's just the way he liked it.

Because of that, the last thing Techno was expecting to hear as he made himself dinner was loud screaming from outside.

He was moving within seconds, reaching over and grabbing his sword that was never too far from his side. Peacefulness could never overpower paranoia. The random screaming outside his house proved his point. He wonders what it was as his hands stray towards his armor.

The smart part of him should just turn around and sit back down by the fire, where it was warm and there was no risk of running into something he didn't want to. But the other part of him needed to know what was going on. What if it was some kid from the village that got lost? Techno wasn't above letting them die, but he kind of needed to be on good terms with them, since he got a lot of his supplies from there. So he sighed, pulling on his armor, grabbing a torch, and preparing to go out into the night.

And if the voices in the back of his head whispered that the screams sounded just a little too much like his youngest brother, well that wasn't why he was going out anyways. He was just being careful. Chat wouldn't leave him alone if he chose to ignore it, they were fucking annoying like that.

So he travels out into the snow. Luckily he was smart enough to light up the area around him, so there weren't many mobs in the immediate area. He started towards where the screams had come from, and for a couple of seconds he swears he can hear what sounded like sobs, but the wind was starting to pick up and most of the noise was lost to the roar.

He swipes his sword at a couple of zombies, dodging around an arrow and delivering a solid strike to the skeleton, shattering it apart. He really hopes that whatever kid managed to get lost out here wasn't in multiple pieces when he got there. He still wanted to eat dinner after this.

He's pretty sure the screaming came from around here, but he's looking around and there doesn't appear to be anyone. The bad part about the Arctic was that the weather tended to get rid of any trace of the people here, the wind and the snow covering any tracks that might have been left. Good for when he wanted to disappear easily, but bad for when he wanted to track something down.

He walks around for a couple more minutes, killing a few more mobs along the way before he decides to give up, turning and walking back towards his cabin.

His foot hits something buried under the snow and he stumbles back, his cape nearly tripping him. He stares down at the oddly shaped lump in the ground, because now that he looked at it, the lump was oddly human shaped, and he could see what looked like a torn white shirt and exposed skin hiding behind a mound of snow.

Shit. He guessed he found what he was looking for. He crept forwards, unsure if the figure was alive and dead, and carefully stepped around the small mound of snow, squinting his eyes and raising his torch in order to get a better look.

Oh no. That wasn't good.

It was *Tommy* staring back at him. Or at least lying there. His eyes were closed, his skin an ashy grey and his lips tinged blue. He was curled into himself, hands reached up to cup at his ears, blue tipped fingers latched onto the skin. He was wearing a fucking tee-shirt and ripped up pants, and was he not wearing a shoe? Was the kid trying to get himself killed?

More alarming was the multitude of injuries on him. Techno could see multiple shards of metal and wood sticking out from him, and his clothes were completely bloodstained and covered in soot. He was sure he could see what looked like burns littering his body.

What the hell happened?

He can't think about that. Every second he stands out here wasting time was another step towards not being able to help Tommy. Techno knew hypothermia, and it was deadly. It looked like Tommy had been out wandering in the snow for hours in his ridiculous outfit.

For a second Techno debates leaving him there and pretending he never saw him. But that felt unnecessarily cruel, even for him. Leaving Tommy out here would mean certain death. And even if he really did not want to deal with whatever the hell was going on, he couldn't let Tommy die on him. So Techno leaned down and picked Tommy up, the coldness of the young boy's skin making him frown. He shifts Tommy so he's slumped over Techno's shoulder, careful not to push any slivers further into his skin before he starts the trek home. He swings his sword menacingly at every mob that dared to get close, but focused more on getting home than trying to kill the monsters surrounding him.

Techno can't feel the rise and fall of Tommy's chest anymore. He secures an arm around the boys' legs and takes off at a run, trying not to panic.

Last time he saw Tommy, the kid was exiled and miserable and it was hilarious, but now he looked half dead and nothing about it was funny at all. Techno might not be on the best terms with him, but that doesn't mean he wants him to die.

"What happened to you Theseus?" He mused out loud, the nickname slipping out easily as he glances down at his brother's pale face.

He gets into his house, slamming the door behind him and locking it firmly before moving Tommy to the couch, staring at him and trying to catalogue the list of injuries and how he needed to treat them.

The hypothermia was the largest issue right now. He couldn't really deal with anything else until that was taken care of. First things first he raced to his room and grabbed some new clothes and a cape, stopping by his chests to grab some bandages and some potions for later.

He mutters an apology before starting to strip off Tommy's soaking wet clothes, carefully manipulating his brother's stiff limbs into the new shirt and pants before piling a couple of blankets on top of him. While doing that he carefully notes any other major wounds. The biggest was the piece of metal in his shoulder, everything else just a simple matter of removing some splinters and dealing with the cuts and burns. He really hopes none of them are infected.

He walked to the kitchen, shuffling things around until he found some hot pads that Phil gifted him when he first moved there. He quickly warmed them up, bringing them back to Tommy and pacing them around the trunk of his body, under his armpits, on his neck, over his abdomen. He checks his fingers and toes for frostbite, but it wasn't anywhere serve enough to warrant any extra treatment, so Techno just shoves some warm socks and gloves onto him.

He tucked all his brother's limbs under the heavy blankets, grabbing a hat and shoving it over his dirty blonde hair. The strands were greasy and dirty. Techno cringes at the feeling of the strands under his fingers. He notes some blood on his neck under his ears, but he doesn't see any open head wound, so he'll have to figure the source out later.

While waiting for Tommy to warm up he walks to the kitchen, warming some water in a kettle and grabbing the softest cloths he could find. Ghostbur had gifted them to him a while ago. He places the supplies down on the ground by Tommy's head and carefully dips the

cloth in warm water to start wiping away the dirt and blood around his head, checking to make sure the water wasn't too hot at first. He carefully checks for any lumps or cuts on his head, but he can't find any, so he hopes that means there's no head injuries.

After he finished that he sits and waits a couple more stressful minutes before sticking a thermometer in his brother's mouth, frowning at the result. Still way too low. He didn't want it to come to this, but he needed Tommy's temperature to rise quickly. It had probably only been ten minutes or so, but the quicker he gets heat back into his body the quicker Techno can deal with the other injuries.

"You better be grateful for this," Techno grumbled, reluctantly stripping off his own armor and cape before stripping to his undergarments, climbing in beside Tommy and carefully lifting his little brother up to rest against his chest, Tommy's head rolling back on Techno's shoulder. Techno always ran hot in the overworld, so his body heat should warm up Tommy fairly quickly.

He tries not to notice how thin his brother is. How even through three layers of clothes he can still feel Tommy's ribs. The kid was always skinny, but this was a bit ridiculous. Was he not eating in exile? He taught him how to farm, but he wouldn't be surprised if the kid forgot all his lessons out of spite.

Techno's fairly uncomfortable right now. He wasn't that big on the whole physical contact thing, and even with Tommy completely out of it, lying here practically cuddling him was a bit embarrassing. Chat was awe-ing in his ears. Tommy's elbow was digging into his side. Fuck, he really was skinny wasn't he? How had this happened? Tommy looked like shit, and Techno's pretty sure that the kid didn't do this to himself. From the quick glance Techno got at those burns, they weren't from a random creeper. Techno knew what TNT burns looked like, and those were them.

But Tommy wouldn't blow himself up, he was an idiot, but not that big of an idiot. And it would be hard for him to get the amount of explosives for him to do this amount of damage. So someone had to have done this. But who? Who would have done this to him?

He can't think about that now. If he starts the chat will get too loud and then he won't be able to focus on anything. He needs to be present at the moment, because there was still so much he needed to deal with.

***HurtProtectSaveWhodidthisHowdaretheyBloodforthebloodgodEEEEEEWhydoeshealwaysget into this shit Wasn't retirement supposed to be peaceful Hey Techno you're the best Help him Look after him Idiot F Help him Rip Tommy in nit Revenge Techno nurse Save him***

He takes a deep breath and forces the voices away, focusing on monitoring Tommy's breathing, the weak fall of his chest with every rattling breath he takes. Techno focuses on it, carefully counting it out as he lies there, praying his brother would warm up soon.

Around twenty minutes later he grabs the thermometer and sticks it in Tommy's mouth again, gently tipping his head back in order to read it. The temperature was still worrying, but it was good enough that Techno felt comfortable getting up and just relying on the blankets again.

He makes sure he's gentle, carefully lifting Tommy off of him, repositioning him on the bed as he stood. Tommy shouldn't be that easy to move. He shouldn't just be lying there, face and body slack, barely breathing and still as cold as the Arctic air outside. Techno shakes his head, refusing to think about it.

He carefully peels some of Tommy's layers back, revealing the large piece of metal in his shoulder and debating how to best deal with this. It was pretty ugly.

Thankfully, it wasn't that long, not even piercing through the other side of his shoulder, but it was in an awkward place. Tommy had clearly moved around a lot, because it was at a weird angle and the skin around the entrance was a lot more inflamed than it should be. Techno carefully inspected it, reaching down to grab the scalpel in his medical kit. Phil made sure he always had a stocked one on hand. Techno was grateful for it now.

The skin around it was covered in dried blood and was horrible torn up and irritated. Techno knew that with the way it was placed, pulling it out with all the dead skin still around it would probably cause more harm than good. Doesn't mean he really knows what he's doing though. He only had battle style medical training, which normally meant just dealing with it as quickly and as efficiently as possible to get a soldier back up and moving. That wasn't the case here. Tommy didn't have any more battles he needed to go fight, and Techno wasn't working on a body that would probably be killed in a couple of minutes either way.

He carefully starts cutting the skin away, half expecting Tommy to jump up and start searing at him due to the pain. The boy doesn't move. Techno tries not to get more worried.

He cuts away the dead skin, tossing it in a pile on the floor for him to clean up later. It starts bleeding sluggishly, and he takes a cloth and swipes it away, carefully grabbing the shard and pulling it up, making sure to move slowly and gently.

Tommy's let out a tiny whimper, face screwing up in pain slightly as his head tossed to the side. It was the first movement or sound he had made the entire time. Techno was beyond relieved to hear it. It reassured him that Tommy was still alive in there.

The metal clattered to the floor, soaked in red blood as Techno applied pressure to the wound, grabbing a regeneration potion from the floor. He lifted the now bloody cloth and gently poured the red liquid in, looking away as the potion hissed as it entered the wound, working its magic. Techno grabbed a bandage and splashed a bit of a healing potion on it before carefully turning Tommy onto the side and tying the bandage around his shoulder tightly.

That was probably going to be the worse of it. He really hopes that's the worst of it.

The next hour or so consisted of Techno sort of just zoning out and carefully pulling slivers of wood and metal from his brothers' skin, wrapping the larger ones and just dabbing some regeneration and healing potions on the smaller ones. The splinters were everywhere, lodged in his arms and legs as well as his torso and even some piercing his neck and face. One large splinter seemed to have cut through Tommy's cheek. Techno's sure it'll probably scar. Tommy will probably enjoy that.

Once he was done with that he moved onto the burns. The more severe ones were on his arms, one particularly nasty one starting at his fingertips on his left hand, crawling up his arm to about his elbow. It was as if Tommy reached into a fire. Techno's fairly sure that's exactly what happened.

He carefully applies some burn cream before gently wrapping them with potion-soaked bandages, taking the time to make sure every wound was clean and secure. A lot of the job consisted of just washing off the sheer amount of dirt and blood that was caked onto his skin. He's pretty sure Tommy hadn't washed in weeks with the state he was in.

Once he was clean Techno carefully poured a healing potion down his throat, holding his mouth closed and carefully massaging his neck to make sure the liquid trickled its way down. Then he tucks his brother into the thick blanket and takes a step back, narrowing his eyes and double-checking to make sure everything was dealt with.

Throughout the entire procedure, other than that one whimper he let out, Tommy was completely unresponsive. Even when Techno gently talked to him, calling his name and narrating what he was doing, Tommy showed no signs of hearing or comprehending him. It was alarming to say the least.

Techno remembers when they were younger and Tommy got a fever. Even when passed out Tommy was moving, constantly shifting and talking in his sleep, unable to lie still for longer than a few minutes. It was the same way he slept. Tommy was always in movement, awake or asleep, and seeing him so deathly still was a bit concerning for Techno.

For maybe the thousandth time, Techno wonders what the hell happened to him. Someone did this to Tommy. If Techno had to guess he thinks that some explosions went off around him, and the kid had to flee as fast as he could, which led him to wander through the Arctic with no proper supplies or destination. But even so, that was only a hunch. Tommy wasn't even supposed to be seeing people in exile was he? When Techno visited it was only him and Ghostbur. But Ghostbur wasn't anywhere to be seen, so he wasn't sure what was going on.

Techno hated not knowing. He started to pace, nervous energy that had been building during the past couple of hours peaking as he opened and closed a fist, occasionally shooting a glance at Tommy to make sure he was alive.

Techno was pretty sure he'd be okay. But Techno also didn't like to work with 'pretty sure'. Tommy had lost a lot of blood, there weren't many big cuts, but he did have a ton of smaller ones that had built up over time. And those burns were fairly severe as well. And that's not even thinking about it any of them got infected. He cleaned them fairly well, but there was always a hint of uncertainty when it came to things like that. He thinks the hypothermia and frostbite were dealt with okay, but he'd be monitoring it for the next few hours for sure.

So many things could go wrong. He hadn't noticed any internal bleeding, but there very well might have been some he didn't see. Tommy was malnourished, Techno didn't actually know how long he had been out there. He could be starving to death or parched and Techno would never know. There could be a head injury, or infection could set in, or maybe he was too late in the first place and he would watch Tommy die in front of him. Fuck. How was he supposed to explain that to Phil?



Tommy and him weren't on good terms. Techno looked at him and still remembered the bitter sting of Tommy using him as a weapon, means to an end. He remembers the hate consistently burning in his eyes ever since the festival fiasco. He remembers taking joy in mocking the boy and how Tommy always looked one second away from stabbing him. He recalled how pissed he was that his brothers would openly create a new government in front of him when he made it very clear that he wouldn't tolerate any of that.

But now? How could he keep being mad when Tommy looked so pathetic? When he was clearly half dead? When Techno heard him screaming and sobbing in pain before finding him passed out in a snowstorm. Something had happened to Tommy. Something bad. And Techno wanted to rip out the throat of whoever did this to him.

Techno sat down heavily in his chair, eyes carefully searching Tommy for any signs of movement or responsiveness. There was nothing. Maybe that was a good sign. Tommy probably needed some rest in order to recover properly. And while he did that Techno would wait and do everything he could to save him.

He would get the full story when Tommy woke up. If he woke up.

Techno sighed. He wasn't going to be getting much sleep tonight.

## Chapter End Notes

Hope you enjoyed!! I am totally throwing the canon timeline to the wind, but I am going to try to be at least a tiny bit true to the plotline. Or at least that's the plan so far, we'll see how it goes

# Long before the troubles of my youth

## Chapter Summary

Today was going to be a good day. Absolutely nothing was going to go wrong. Techno would work around the house, Tommy would sleep, and that would be it. The most exciting thing Techno would do was fix some of the pictures in his house. Everything was going to be fine. Denial never worked well for Techno.

## Chapter Notes

No Tommy in this chapter, sorry!! This is honestly more of a filler chapter, I just needed to set some things up for future chapters, but I promise you guys are going to get some Tommy and Techno interactions soon enough :) Anyways, hope you guys enjoy!!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Techno doesn't sleep that night. Every time his eyelids even slightly pull down he's shaking himself awake, getting up and pacing around the room, eyes glued to his little brother.

He latched onto the slow movement of Tommy's chest, watching the gentle rise and fall while he sleeps, making sure that it never stuttered to a stop when he looked away.

Tommy was an active sleeper. He should be flailing at this moment, muttering to himself and kicking off all the blankets. Techno remembered one night many years ago when Techno had to share a room with Tommy. Techno was a very light sleeper who would wake up every time Tommy made any type of noise, half the times when he was startled awake Tommy would have somehow thrown his blanket down onto the floor in his movement.

Techno had spent most of the night re-tucking his brother in. Back then he thought it was the most annoying thing in the world. Now? Now he really wished that he could be back doing that, because seeing a Tommy as still as this just felt wrong.

He's half scared that Tommy will just die in his sleep, or that he was already dead and Techno just didn't notice. But every time he looks over Tommy's chest was still rising and falling at a steady rate. He was still okay.

Even if he wasn't wary of Tommy's possible death, the voices wouldn't let Techno sleep. They were fucking rowdy.

Techno wouldn't lie and say he wasn't a protective person. He pretended he wasn't, that social connections never mattered much to him, that he really couldn't care less about what others think of him. But it's a lie. It's all a lie carefully constructed so that people will never use his love against him.

Ever since he was young his family was all that he had. He knew that he would do anything for them. When they were children, Techno was inseparable from his siblings. His brothers and he were a unit, a team forged in blood and sustained by love and trust. When Phil and him left to expand their Arctic Empire, he drifted away from his two brothers. That had hurt more than he thought it would. Missing out on Tommy's childhood, seeing the resentment build up in Wilbur's eyes, it was things like that Techno knew he'd never be able to reverse. So he drifted from his brothers and grew closer to his father, things changed. Techno had to harden in order to lead an empire, and his personal relationships suffered due to it.

But they never changed much. The trust between them might be frail and tattered, ruined by a series of misunderstandings, fights, and stubbornness, but the love never went away. Techno loved Tommy as much as he did ten years ago, when Tommy was just a child that clutched onto Techno's cape and asked him to tell him stories of the Greek gods.

And now here his little brother was, broken and ruined and Techno loves him despite it all. He knows that when Tommy wakes up things will be bad. Techno had long ago forgotten how to properly interact with his little brother, and he knew that Tommy still blamed him for a lot of things, but Techno refused to let that get in the way of his anger. Because he was really fucking angry.

Someone had hurt Tommy, and Techno would not rest until he found out who it was and tore their throat out. The voices echoed that same idea. Just a lot more yelling and a lot more swearing involved.

The Chat wasn't going to shut up for a while, and Techno was starting to get a headache from their constant calling for blood and violence. He agreed with them, but what the hell was he supposed to do at this point? He didn't know who did this and Tommy needed him here, not out hunting someone down. That would come later.

Techno may be retired, but revenge was revenge. And no one hurt his family.

Techno had just finished making himself breakfast when Tommy started to stir. Instantly he started to panic. It started with the shifting, Tommy tossing his head around, squirming slightly under the sheets. It wasn't a lot, but it was more movement than Techno had seen since he found him.

Techno was hopeful, waiting for his brother's eyes to open and the loud cursing to start, but Tommy's face screwed up in pain, a low keening noise leaving his throat as he started tossing as if in a nightmare.

Techno realized that maybe it wasn't time for Tommy to get up. His body was weak, malnourished, and beat up, suffering the aftereffects of various injuries. The healing potions would still be in his system, working their magic on him. Getting up and moving around, wasting any of that precious energy, might cause a setback.

So Techno turned to his chests, rustling around before he found one filled with a silvery liquid, like bottled up starlight.

Carefully, he walked towards Tommy, bringing a cup of water as well.

He was careful not to move Tommy around much as he gently pried his jaw open and slipped the sleeping potion down his throat, carefully closing his mouth and making sure the liquid was swallowed before gently tipping down some water as well. Within minutes Tommy had settled again, the lines of pain creasing his face smoothing out.

Techno let out a sigh, shaking his head as he stood up once again. That should knock Tommy out for at least another day. That gave Techno plenty of time to try and figure out what to do next. Tommy would want to leave immediately; Techno wasn't overly opposed to that. But he's also pretty sure that Tommy didn't have anywhere to go that was safe. And Techno didn't waste half of his medical supplies on him only for him to go off and get himself killed.

Techno would have to convince him to stay, because of the practicality of course. Tommy might be an annoying little shit, but he was an annoying little shit that was strangely useful in multiple ways. That's what it was. Techno could use him. Tommy would be good to have on his side just in case. Those were the only motivations Techno had for keeping him here and safe.

With nothing to do and Tommy going to be completely out of it for a while still, Techno starts to stress clean. He's proud to say it's one of his healthier coping mechanisms. He putters around the house, fixing up small things while occasionally checking up on his sleeping brother.

Today was going to be a good day. Absolutely nothing was going to go wrong. Techno would work around the house, Tommy would sleep, and that would be it. The most exciting thing Techno would do was fix some of the pictures in his house.

Retirement should be boring. Yesterday was way too exciting for his liking, so today would make up for it in the sheer boredom that plagued him.

Then he got a whisper from Phil. And everything went to shit.

*They know where you are. Get ready old friend.*

What the fuck did that even mean? Who were they? What was going on? Techno was in retirement! He should be farming potatoes and being bored, not suddenly looking after his half-dead brother and apparently having a bunch of people about to attack him.

What do these people not understand about retirement? He was done! Over with his violent ways. He was taking a break. That wasn't an invitation to come and murder him. Phil tells him that it's Quackity and a gang, which was kind of alarming to hear, especially with the added note that they had full netherite.

Weren't they all broke? How did they get full netherite gear?

Fuck. Techno just wanted to take care of his turtles man.

It wasn't like he could move. First of all, he had put a lot of fucking effort into this house. He had built this place and put effort and love into crafting the walls, decorating and making it his own. He couldn't just leave it behind. He planned to live the rest of his life here, and he wasn't letting that change. And second of all, he had an unconscious and injured teenager who wouldn't be waking up for these events due to the potion Techno gave him.

Alright. Techno was hoping to never do this again, but he knew how to prepare for battle. He knew what he needed to do.

He chucked some water bottles into his brewing stand. Potions would be important. He had run out of most of his healing and regeneration last night, using them all on Tommy. He would need strength too, lots of strength. He went through the motions of the potion making, glancing out of his window every couple of seconds.

With the potions on the go and most of his toolbelt occupied with weapons and other supplies, he needed to focus on getting Tommy safe.

Techno wasn't sure what happened to his brother, and he didn't know who did this to him. He's pretty sure Tubbo wouldn't hurt him, but the others? There's a possibility that it could've been them and Techno isn't risking them finding Tommy.

He grabs a pickaxe and goes into the basement, carefully hollowing out a tiny room below it, grabbing an old sleeping bag and placing it down, making sure the space wasn't too small before he went back upstairs. Tommy wouldn't wake up for a while still, so Techno could just shove him down there and hope for the best.

Carrying Tommy down was ridiculously easy. Techno was going to stuff this kid with food the second he wakes up. Tommy didn't move at all during the entire process, entirely dead to the world. Techno took extra care to tuck him into the sleeping bag comfortably, quickly checking his wounds and his temperature before he decided that he was fine.

Techno put up a few torches just in case before climbing back up the ladder, carefully smoothing out the floor over the hole. It looked as if there was nothing there. Even if they searched his house, they most likely wouldn't find Tommy there unless they decided to blow it up. He's pretty sure they won't blow it up.

With his brother mostly safe tucked under his house, Techno focuses on preparations. He's panicking a little, only because they caught him off guard. He needs more strength potions, and god he's really tired of the amount of blaze powder it takes to make some of these things.

He checks out the window again, spotting what looks like Ghostbur standing in his front yard. He doesn't have time for the ghost, ignoring the familiar pang of pain that comes with seeing his dead brother standing there. Ghostbur doesn't make a move to come closer or really do anything at all, so Techno ignores him, checking on his potions again. Strength, speed, healing. He had it all. He just needed a little more time to make them stronger, to properly stock up.

“Knock knock!” He hears Ghostbur’s voice filter through the door and takes a deep breath. Not the time. He practically falls down the ladder, opening the door to reveal the ghost.

“Hello Techno!”

“Hello,” Techno said, immediately turning and starting to organize things. Ghostbur doesn’t seem affected by the dismissal in the least bit.

“How are you? I was just passing through and came by to visit,” Ghostbur flouted through the door, watching Techno with an absent smile.

“I am bad,” Techno tells him honestly. “Very very bad ghost of Wilbur Soot.”

“What can I do to help?”

“Are you good at violence?” Techno asks and Ghostbur ignored him, going upstairs to look around.

“Potions!” He exclaims. “I’m good at potions, do you need help with potions? What’s going on? Why are you so stressed?”

“There’s like four dudes coming to kill me,” Techno tells him, frantically sorting through his chests and grabbing what he needs. God he needed all of this to have been done yesterday.

“Why are they coming to kill you?” Ghostbur’s back with him again, frowning and looking confused. Techno loves his brothers. He really does. But why do they always have to be so bothersome and useless at the worst times? “What have you done wrong?”

“Where are my arrows?” Techno asks, steadily ignoring that question.

“Here have this!” Ghostbur says happily, placing down almost a stack of spectral arrows. Techno doesn’t question it, simply grabbing them and absently thanking the ghost. “Can I help with the brewing?”

“Sure,” Techno shrugged. That was simple enough, he could throw Ghostbur at that and hope it distracted him enough that Techno could do what he needed to. “I need strength potions.”

“How do I do that?”

“You know, I don’t think you being here helps the process,” Techno says, gritting his teeth and rethinking his previous plan. Can Ghostbur get hurt? Techno doesn’t want him caught in the crossfire. That would be bad.

“I’m going to put vines on your house,” Ghostbur says, walking out of the room. Techno wishes that he wasn’t the only person in this goddamn house with any working braincells. He follows Ghostbur outside, and sure enough his ghostly brother is literally just hanging vines up around his house. Whatever. It didn’t look horrible.

“Technoblade, I was just passing through and thought I would stop by and visit you, see how you were doing. I’m not going to be here very long,” Ghostbur says and Techno tries not to feel bad. He would love Ghostbur’s company literally any other day of the week. “I’ve been

away from everything for a while. Dream sent me out into the wilderness, so I've been wandering for a while, and the problem is I do melt in the rain, and the snow."

"That's great," Techno said, blinking and just kind of pushing that information away to listen to later. He'll unpack that once he isn't about to die. "That's wonderful. You gotta get out of here Wilbur. They're going to see you here, and I don't know what they're going to do to you. I don't know what they're going to do to me. But I don't think it's going to be good."

Techno won't be able to focus and get himself out of this situation if he had two brothers he needed to worry about. At least Tommy was out of it, that made him feel a bit better. But Ghostbur could possibly get hurt if he stayed here, and Techno didn't want that. He didn't do enough to save his brother when he was alive, and he'd be damned to see him get hurt while dead as well.

"There are some bad men coming to get me," Techno starts to say, but Ghostbur suddenly gasps, pointing to some random blue sheep standing a couple feet away.

"Techno look!" Ghostbur grabbed his arm, the pressure feeling inconsistent as Wilbur's shape shifted. "It's a sign. Blue!"

"Ghostbur I need you to take that sheep and get as far away from here as you can," Techno instructed, using the distraction to his advantage. The sun was starting to set again. Had it really been that long?

"Can I have a leash?" Ghostbur asked.

"Sure, I'll find one," Techno went back inside, looking through his chest.

"I can go far away," Ghostbur was nodding. "Would it be easier for you if I went far away?"

"I just want you to be safe Ghostbur," Techno told him, grabbing a leash and handing it over.

"I'm always safe!" Ghostbur protested. "Nothing can hurt me, I'm already dead. What are they going to do, double kill me?"

Techno doesn't want to think about how the fact that Wilbur was already dead was a testament to Techno's failure.

"Take the lead," Techno practically pushes him out the door. "Go stand behind a hill or something."

"Okay!" Ghostbur starts walking away. "Bye bye Techno! Have fun preparing for your event."

With that his ghostly brother was gone. Techno got back to preparing. He hadn't been prepared for war in ages. He hoped he could still pull it off.

***PearlsPearlsPearlsShieldRunBloodforthebloodgodBloodforthebloodgodWhathappenetoretirement?EEEPearlsandsheildAreyouokay?DeepbreathesBloodforthebloodgod***

Chat was going insane. They weren't very helpful. He already had most of everything they were suggesting. You'd think that having thousands of little voices in your ears spouting advice would be helpful. It really wasn't.

Eventually, he had to accept that there was nothing else he could do. He was running out of space in his bag and he had run out of water bottles for potions. They would be there at any moment. Techno closed his eyes, taking some deep breathes and preparing himself for whatever was going to happen. He felt himself settle down, his heartbeat slowing as he settled out of the pre-battle anxiety and got ready for the actual fight to begin.

Techno saw them on the hill, conveniently right beside Ghostbur. Somehow he isn't surprised in the least bit. He's even less surprised when Ghostbur turns around and starts waving at him.

Ghostbur runs over, pleasantly informing him that they're here to kill him and asking if he has anything to say back.

Techno tries to tell him to tell them that he's not there, but they are quite literally at his doorstep. Ghostbur makes an attempt. Techno just prepares for everything. There's four of them, all decked out in enchanted netherite.

"Why did you guys travel out here to my humble abode?" Techno asks, leading them away from his door, away from where they might enter and find Tommy.

"You need to pay for your war crimes," Tubbo says, sounding way too happy for someone who literally came to kill him.

"That's in the past," Techno tries. Really it was. That happened like, months ago. "That was a different Technoblade. I'm a changed man now. I'm in retirement. I'm a good person now Tubbo."

The best tactic for battles you're greatly outnumbered in is to just stall. Stall and wait for them to make a mistake. Get as much time as you could and start making a plan.

"I have spent all this time, so many months, trying to be a better person. The voices, they demand blood all the time, and I deny them," Techno carefully notes the weapons in their hands. Just diamond axes. Good for close range, but not far. They have some bows, but Techno knows that he has a better shot. "Please, please, don't make me kill you all. Please just leave."

"Why don't you show us around?" Quackity says, and Techno tenses a bit. "Show us what you've been up to?"

He doesn't want to. He got rid of Tommy, but there's still a chance of them finding him. Or questioning the bloody rags in the garbage. Or seeing his clothes that were shoved hazardedly into a chest. This was such a bad idea. He needed to find a way out of it.

He points out the bees first. Techno remembers that he really likes bees. Tommy had mentioned that plenty of times when rambling about his friend while in Pogtopia. It works



weirdly well. He tries to run, doesn't get far.

"Look here Techno," Quackity says, raising his axe threateningly. Techno immediately clocks him as the biggest threat. Not because of his skill, everyone knew Quackity had none, but because he had the control. Tubbo was the president, but he clearly wasn't the leader of this group. The rest of them were shifting uneasily, looking to Quackity for guidance. "You aren't getting out of here in one piece. I'll fuck you up Techno. It's either going to be the easy way, or it's going to be the hard way. There's no other way out of it."

Techno had never been one for the easy way out of things. Life was so boring that way. They wanted him to go back to L'Manburg and stand trial. He knew that it would not be a fair one. Even if he cooperated, chances are he wouldn't make it out unscathed.

"There's no other way huh?" He questions, reaching for his potions and his sword, clocking all their positions. "No other way huh? Well, I chose blood."

The fight was on. Splashing some strength and speed potions on himself, he attacks. Around him the four of them dissolve into chaos, every hit he lands sending them stumbling back injured. Their blows glance off of him, barely even impacting him through his armor and his potions. The voices scream in victory, he grins in their indulgence. He's gaining the upper hand easily.

Maybe retirement was overrated.

He managed to knock both Tubbo and Fundy off the board and it turning towards Ranboo when he notices it. Quackity was on his fucking horse.

He stops immediately. He had grown quite attached to Carl over the past few months, the horse his only constant companion. The idea of Quackity hurting him caused the blood to boil in his veins. The voices scream for blood, they scream for vengeance, but Techno can't move. He can't risk Carl.

"Techno, you pull some shit and I will fucking kill Carl," Quackity promises, and Techno really hates how the threat hits home. This is why he shouldn't get attached to things. This is why life is better without sedimentarily. But it wasn't supposed to be like that anymore! Techno was retired! It should have been safe to settle down, to learn to love stupid things like a house and a horse.

"What do you want?" He says through gritted teeth.

"Drop your shit Techno, everything you got," Quackity is grinning, a sick satisfaction on his face. Techno wishes he killed him first.

He complied. He had no other choice but to. He parted with all his weapons and potions he just spent ages making. He drops his pearls and all of his defenses, making sure to keep the totem hidden away. He couldn't drop that. They even made him take off his armor, which honestly just felt kind of rude.

“Technoblade, this is what’s going to happen next,” Quackity was calm, having won this round. The confidence had returned to his voice, and he runs a hand through Carls mane with a grin. “We’re going to take you back to L’Manburg, and you’re going to face trial. You understand?”

“Sounds like bullshit,” He says, intending to piss them off more to buy himself time. He doesn’t want to leave, he couldn’t leave.

His eyes dart back to the house, to where Tommy was holed up under the ground, weak and injured, probably unable to defend himself should something go wrong. Techno doesn’t want to leave him. Even just being here, unable to see and make sure he was still breathing made him nervous.

But he couldn't let them kill Carl. He refused to do that too. It was an impossible situation.

“You are going to come to L’Manburg and be put on trial, understood? Or else I will kill Carl. Don’t think I won’t Technoblade. I won’t hesitate to fuck his shit up. Do you understand?” Quackity repeats, and Techno tenses.

He knew what he had to do.

Tommy was out of it. He would be out of it for a while still. Techno didn’t have much of a choice here. It wasn’t like he could explain to them that he had an injured teenager in his house and couldn't leave him unattended. They might take Tommy away, or worse. Techno didn’t know who did that to him. It might as well have been these four.

Techno could go with them, escape, and come back before Tommy woke up. He had done harder things before.

“Yes,” He says through gritted teeth. Quackity grinned, knowing he had won.

“Alright fellas,” He said cheerfully. “Let’s escort him to L’Manburg.”

Techno really wishes he killed him first.

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Techno had been kidnapped before. Multiple times actually. This one was by far the worst.

They didn’t even have the means to transport them properly. They need to use Ghostbur’s lead to get Carl to come and then they need to barter to get Ghostbur to actually give it up. They didn’t even have snacks. Pisspoor service.

It was fun to bug Tubbo though. The kid really was a lot of fun. Very easy to rile up and upset. Techno even managed to get him to apologize for his own planned kidnapping. It reminded Techno painfully of Tommy, and sometime he could swear he could hear his brother joining in on the antics, poking fun at his friend and riling everyone up.

Techno really hopes the kid stays asleep. Techno just needs a few hours to deal with whatever this was and then he could go back and make sure he’s okay.

He wonders if any of these people know what happened to him, or if they know anything at all.

Ghostbur points out that Logsted is destroyed. He's only vaguely aware that was the name of the place Tommy had been for his exile. Techno whips his head around, but he can't see much at the angle he's stuck in. He can just barely make out the ruins of some sort of log building, but it isn't much to go off of. It looked exploded. Techno places that piece of the puzzle in the back of his mind. Whatever happened to Tommy probably started there. His exile was the center of it all.

Wasn't it a long walk to get to Techno's place? How long had Tommy been wandering out in the snow, injured and cold? Techno doesn't want to think about it. There's a lull in the conversation, and Techno decides he's not going to get a better segway than this.

"So," He says awkwardly. Everything about this is awkward. "Any of you seen Tommy lately?"

Tubbo pauses his rowing for a second, his entire body tensing before he starts again. Techno can see his hands clench the paddle tighter.

"He's banished," Tubbo says, his voice suddenly clipped. He sounded more stoic and professional than he did throughout this entire trip. Interesting. Techno wonders if that's because of guilt or frustration. Techno knows it was Tubbo who exiled Tommy in the first place. Power always corrupts. He just wishes it hadn't effect literal kids. They should be off playing in fields of flowers or something, not exiling each other and stabbing each other in the back.

"Well yeah," Techno continues, ignoring the warning signs Tubbo gave off. He needed to know if they knew anything. If maybe one of them even was the person to hurt Tommy. "But you guys still visit him right? Just cause he's banished doesn't mean he's not your friend."

That's a low blow. He's sure they had visited him, or at least some of them did. He knew Tubbo didn't. Most likely. Techno wonders how Tommy dealt with that.

In front of him, Tubbo fumes. He turns around to face Techno, opening his mouth like he was about to say something. Techno had never thought Tubbo would ever have the guts to genuinely try and kill him with his bare hands, but now he's kind of doubting it. He's almost hoping Tubbo tries. That would be fun. The voices coo in the back of his mind.

"I visit him every once in a while," Ranboo speaks up quickly, cutting in before Tubbo can start talking. The young president turns and starts rowing again. Techno focuses his attention on the hybrid. "I haven't been in a while though, too busy with uh, stuff."

That's suspicious and odd but Techno isn't here to really care about whatever secret thing Ranboo doesn't want him to know about.

"So he's been alone?" Techno asks, frowning. First of all, that made no sense in the narrative. Tommy didn't do this to himself. Techno crossed that out immediately. Tommy was stupid, but not that stupid. And second, Tommy thrived off of attention. Maybe he did do it himself

if he was left alone for that long. Solitude causes the mind to do weird things. Just look at Wilbur. Techno doesn't like that thought.

"I think Dream visits him a lot," This time it's Fundy speaking up.

"Yeah!" Ranboo echoes, and Techno's brain kind of just scratches to a stop. "Dreams there a lot. I always have to avoid him when going to visit, and he might be stealing my mail, but it's also likely I just misplaced it."

Techno tunes out the rest of the conversation. Dream. He should have known. Who had the power to have enough explosives to seriously hurt someone just sitting around? Who here on the server hates Tommy just enough to try and blow him up? Tommy had an annoying talent at managing to piss off the most powerful people on every server he joins.

Dully he's aware that Quackity is changing the subject, Tubbo quickly jumping to move the topic on as fast as he can. Techno ignores it. He starts to stew.

It had to be Dream. No one else makes sense, no one else hated Tommy enough to seriously hurt him like that. He'll have to double check when Tommy's up, but for now? Now he had a target. Now he could make a plan.

It might not be soon, since he is literally being rowed to his own execution, but Techno would find out who did that to Tommy and they would pay. And if it turns out it was Dream who did it? While this wouldn't be the first time Techno's had to fight an immortal being.

Blood for the BLOOD God. Revenge was always sweet.

## Chapter End Notes

Uh oh! Techno had to leave Tommy alone in his house for a little bit, I'm sure nothing will go wrong :)

I paraphrased almost this entire chapter. I just watched Techno's stream and then tried to remember what they said cause I was way too lazy to go back and copy down everything they say word for word. So some of the dialogue is stolen from the stream, but most of it's just me improvising lol. I also cut a fair amount of it out because they really just sometimes talk about absolutely nothing in the middle of the stream and while it's very funny it's very hard to write lol. Tommy perspective up next!! I'm mostly done with it so it should be up fairly soon as long as school doesn't kick my ass lol. hope you guys are all having a wonderful day!!

# **I went out to find my soul and left the only comfort that I know**

## Chapter Summary

Tommy can't hear anything and he wakes up in a small stone room with no recollection of getting there and no idea where he actually is. Yeah, that pretty much sums up his recent luck.

## Chapter Notes

Here we are!! Another Tommy perspective!! I'm sure he's doing great :)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Tommy woke up feeling like shit. That wasn't anything new. He seems to be waking up in pain more often than not ever since exile started.

This was a different shit. Everything was foggy, like he was walking through a snowstorm but the snowstorm was actually in his mind and instead of obscuring his movements it was obscuring his thoughts. Tommy doesn't like metaphors. All he knows is that everything aches, his head was stuffed with cotton, and most of his rational thought seemed determined to run away from him.

He's lying on something soft. That's the first thing he notices. He's kind of forgotten what a proper bed feels like. Back in Logsted the blanket was always scratchy and too thin, the bedframe constantly digging into his back. He couldn't make anything better with his limited tools and supplies.

It's also very warm? That's weird as well. Being by the sea meant that there was always a harsh breeze at night that made him shiver. He's only ever truly warm in the nether, but he wasn't allowed there anymore.

He wasn't- holy fucking shit.

Tommy sat up as fast as he could, nearly banging his head on the low ceiling above him. The sleeping bag constricts around him, his arms trapped under the fabric and he swears, flailing around until he was free. He looks around in panic, the past days events crashing into his mind ruthlessly, the echoing boom, the blooming pain, Dream's smiling face and angered voice.

He looks around in a panic, quickly flailing and climbing out of the small bed, twirling to look around at his surroundings. Where the fuck was he? He didn't recognize any of his surroundings. The walls were close, less than a 4 by 4 area dug out for him. A single flickering torch lit up the small area, casting ominous shadows around. The last thing he remembers is passing out.

*He can't hear, he's screaming and he can't hear why can't he hear-*

He shakes his head, gritting his teeth and pushing the panic down. He doesn't want to think about that. Can't think about that. He'll freak out once he knows where he is. Where the fuck is he? Why doesn't he remember getting here? He's alone and everything hurts and he doesn't know where he is. He can't hear. He can't hear and he isn't sure where he is. This is bad. This is really bad. He can't even call out for help because he won't be able to hear if anyone yells back. He isn't sure he wants the help either. Dream would be so mad if he found him.

There's a ladder on the side of the wall and he stumbles towards it, his shoulder and legs aching at the movement. All his limbs feel frozen solid, unmoving, and uncooperative as he forces them to move. His hands are shaking so bad he can barely get a good grip on the rungs. He briefly debates going back to bed until the fog fully lifts, but the fear keeps him from doing so. He doesn't know where he is.

He pulls himself up on the rungs, his shoulder burning bright with pain as he grits his teeth, forcing himself through it. His mind is spinning as he pushes at the stone above him, the process painfully slow without a pickaxe. Every movement causes his shoulder to squeal with pain and he has to take many breaks, panting with the effort of breaking through the stone.

He didn't have any of his things. His bag was nowhere to be seen and a quick glance down revealed that he wasn't even wearing his own clothes. He was decked out in a fancy long-sleeve white shirt and pants that were way too big on him, barely staying up on his thin hips. There was a cape slung around his shoulders, clasped tightly around his neck. Where the hell had these things come from? How did he manage to forget something like that? There was a puzzle piece missing and it was driving him insane.

He finally managed to move the rock floor above him as he hops out of the hole, scooting his body up as he looks around, bright firelight flickering from multiple torches. He lies on the ground, panting as waves of pain wash over him, nausea stinging the back of his throat. He swallows down the bile, knowing he probably wouldn't be able to puke anything up anyways. When was the last time he ate? He thinks he had an apple a few days ago. Food was hard to come by in exile. Why was he lying on the ground again?

Right. Figuring out where the hell he is. He should get back to that.

He looks around, instantly recognizes the stone walls surrounding him, a cow staring at him like he grew another head.

He's in Technoblade's house. How the hell did he manage to burry below Techno's house? Was it purposeful? It seemed like something he would do, burrowing under his brother's house to steal and heal after everything that happened.

But he doesn't remember doing that. He doesn't remember anything past when he passed out again. Did Techno find him? No. That didn't make sense either. Techno would have just left him out in the cold to die or he would've killed Tommy himself.

None of this makes sense. His mind is filled with cotton and he stumbles to his feet, chest rumbling lowly in pain. He can feel the vibrations, but can't hear them. Oh god this was horrible. He needed to get out of here and fast. If Techno found him here he would kill him for sure. Tommy needs to get out and he needs to get out now.

He stumbles as he tries to move, his legs shaking under him and sending him tumbling to the floor, a cry of panic leaving his lips as he hits the ground shock racing up his hands and centering in his shoulder. Despite his best attempts at suppressing them, tears start to building his eyes.

He's in a shitload of pain, on the floor in the house of a man who once was his brother and now only wishes for his death. He can't even gain enough strength to walk. And he can't fucking hear.

He can't fucking hear.

Tommy would be ashamed of the pathetic sounding sob that came out of his mouth if he could hear it. He couldn't. He couldn't hear a single fucking thing as he curled up on Technoblades floor and started rocking back and forth, sobs tearing out of his throat without his consent. He had tried to ignore the blanketing silence, but he couldn't anymore. He couldn't.

He was just so fucking tired. Nothing made sense, he was terrified out of his mind, and he just wanted to go back home. He wasn't even sure where home was anymore. He wasn't welcome in L'Manburg anymore, and Dream would be pissed if he knew that Tommy left his exile. He was screwed. He had nowhere to go, nowhere safe to hide away until he figured something out. All he knew was that he needed to get out of here. Despite it all he still had some self-preservation skills.

But he couldn't move. His limbs felt like they were frozen to the ground as he strained his ears to hear something, anything past the dense nothingness that blanketed everything. There was nothing. Not even the slightest creak of the house. He couldn't hear his breathing, which was being ripped from his chest in desperate pants.

He would never hear again. Holy shit he was deaf. He didn't know how to fix this, to bullshit his way through this problem.

He would never be able to listen to his discs ever again. He finds himself giggling a bit maniacally, remembering Dream's last gift to him. A jukebox. Irony. A final gift from a friend and he'll never be able to use it. He'll never hear the familiar melody ever again.

He'd never hear Ghostbur's soft echoing voice, never hear Ranboo's amused confusion, the sounds of bees buzzing in the air, fuck he's never going to hear Tubbo's voice again. The last thing he ever heard his best friend say will forever be him telling Tommy to leave the place

he lived and died for. The last conversations he ever had with his friend were tainted by anger and pain. And that's all Tommy will ever hear from him again. That's all he has left.

Tommy's barely aware of himself as he falls fully onto the ground, his shoulder crying out in pain as he curled up, hands clawing at his ears as he sobbed. He couldn't hear himself cry. He could be screaming and he wouldn't even realize it. He could be making no noise at all. He would never know. There was no sound at all.

This must be hell, some sort of divine punishment for something he did. He never really believed in the big man in the sky, but sometimes he wondered. He was a horrible person, who hurt his best friend, then hurt Dream as well. He was selfish and a pain in the ass and now he couldn't hear. Dream was right, he deserved this.

This was his own personal hell, lying here unable to hear as he sobbed, his body aching and his soul screaming. He was trapped in a bubble of silence, constantly forced to live in this purgatory, his hearing torn away from him as violently as it could be. There was a pit of something pushing against his ribs, growing and expanding in size until he thought it might choke him or wrap around his heart and squeeze until it burst. It was painful, and he clawed at his chest, trying to get some air into his lungs.

He isn't sure how long he lies there on the cold stone floor of Techno's basement, but eventually there are no more tears to cry and his throat is raw from the screaming sobs. There's pain behind his eyes, a constant throb. The blackness in his chest was gone, leaving him hollow. Everything else feels numb. He doesn't know what to do. He needs something to do, some sort of direction that he can focus on so he doesn't have to think of anything else.

He needs to get out of here. He may not be able to hear, but he isn't really keen on dying on top of it. Or maybe he is. He isn't quite sure anymore; all his thoughts are so topsy turvy. Either way, he won't give the pigman the satisfaction of killing him. Which is exactly what Techno will do if he comes home to find Tommy sobbing on his floor like a fucking pussy.

He pushes himself to his feet, ignoring the cow and mobs that were staring at him through glass panes. That was creepy as hell. Techno was weird as fuck. It's still a bit hard to move, the exhaustion pulling him down and begging him to rest, but Tommy ignored it. He could do this.

He struggles up the ladder, eyes catching on a bunch of chests lining the walls. Well, he did come here to steal a bunch of stuff right? He opens the first one, his eyes immediately catching on a stack of shining golden apples. Those would be good; absorption would be nice. Tommy's still a bit frail.

He steals some healing potions as well, chugging one as fast as he could. The blanketing warmth that came with the magic settling in his stomach sharpened everything a bit, dulling the blinding pain all over his body. His hearing didn't improve. He tries not to think about it. Tommy stretched out his fingers, shaking himself out and bouncing on his feet. The combined energy from the potion and the apples made him feel much more alive.

There's a sharp sting of blaze powder filling the air, and when Tommy looked at the brewing stands they still looked a bit warm, like someone had recently been brewing with them. Fuck,



that meant Techno had been here recently, and it's likely that he would be back really soon.

Tommy needed to get out of there and fast. He found some cool looking armor and put it on as quickly as he could. He would need some protection from mobs if he was going out again. He didn't really have a destination past getting away from here, so it's better safe than sorry. And maybe he takes a bit of joy stealing from Techno. So sue him. He's been having a rough month, he's allowed to generate happiness from wherever he wants. He grabs a pickaxe and sword out of a chest as well, strapping them to his waist before looking for anything else cool.

Nothing really catches his eye, and every second he sat in here wasting time was another minute that Techno could find him and slaughter him. He needed to go. He needed to run. He wasn't sure where. A part of him wants to go back to Dream, to the familiarity his friend gave him. But every other part of him recoiled from the idea, images of TNT blowing up filling his eyes and phantom ringing pain starting to echo in his head. Okay. Maybe not. He'll figure it out as he goes.

He walked out the door, flinching slightly as the bright sunlight burned his eyes. Jesus that was bright.

He looked around, trying to figure out the best way to go when his eyes snapped to a figure approaching him.

Shit. Fuck. Techno was currently staring at him, perched upon his horse like the douchebag he was. He was wearing iron armor for some reason, but still had his cape waving dramatically in the wind behind him. Prick.

This wasn't good. This really wasn't good. Fuck, next time he's going to have to cut the mental breakdown in half. That shit cost him so much time. Tommy did the only logical thing in this situation.

He turned and ran.

His mind was screaming at him, and now that Techno was out of his eyesight Tommy had no idea what was going on. Shit. He couldn't hear if he was close, couldn't hear if he was stringing an arrow into a bow, had no idea what was going on. This was a horrible idea. He was going to die. Why did he have such shitty luck?

He falls into a hole, because of course he fucking does. Maybe if he digs down fast enough Techno won't see him and he can just cover himself with some dirt or something. This was the worst idea he's ever had, but his frantic brain couldn't think of anything else, so Tommy hole it was.

His stiff aching fingers hit the frozen dirt and he realized that this really was a bad idea.

He catches a glimpse of red out of the corner of his eye and freezes. Techno was standing right beside him, staring down at him. Tommy can't see what his face looked like past the giant boar skull mask he always wore. Shit. He was screwed. This was it. Survive a massive explosion only to die at the hands of the anarchist pig.

Neither of them move for a long moment. It's the most awkward stand-off Tommy has ever been in. He has no idea what to do next. Normally, he can bullshit his way out of anything, normally he could just grin and talk until he got an idea and he wormed his way out of it. He didn't know how to get out of this one. He's too tired to think properly.

Techno just stares down at him. He might be talking. He's probably talking, but Tommy can't fucking hear anything, and his mouth is covered by that stupid mask so Tommy really can't know for sure.

Next thing he knows Techno is grabbing onto his stolen cape and practically hauling him out of the hole until he was sitting on the wet snow. Techno was standing above him, hands on his hips. Tommy can't think. His vision is shifting and Techno's image flickers to Dream, holding a piece of flint and steel in his hand.

Tommy blinks and Techno is back, still silently staring at him, like he was expecting something from Tommy. Tommy is too busy focusing on not hyperventilating. Techno isn't Dream. Dream isn't here. Tommy almost wishes he was. Dream was predictable at least. Dream would give him a painful death, but at least that was a guarantee. Tommy had no idea what Techno was going to do to him.

Shit, whenever Dream got mad he was always less upset if Tommy apologized right? Admitting to his mistake and begging for forgiveness had so far been the easiest way of getting out of trouble. So he does what he always does best, he talks.

"I'm sorry," He blurts out. It's weird, talking and not hearing what's being said. Techno reels back a bit, and Tommy flinches more. Fuck, was that too loud? Did his words even make any sense? He had no idea what he sounded like. It could've been complete and utter gibberish for all he knew. But once he started he couldn't stop. "Sorry, I was going! I promise I didn't take much, or anything, um, I kind of did but I'll give it back if you want it! It was just lying there so I thought you wouldn't care much you know? You're a bitch anyway. But I was on my way, so you don't have to worry about me! Just let me go on my merry way and everything will be fine. Just please don't kill me?"

God he's so stupid. Techno's just staring at him, barely moving at all. Is this really how he's going to die? Sitting outside in the snow in front of his brother? The snow had melted through his pants. He never thought he'd die with a wet ass.

Techno still doesn't move. It's getting kind of creepy at this point. Tommy wishes he just got it over with. The waiting kind of sucked.

"Take a picture, it'll last longer," Tommy grumbled, shifting uncomfortably. His words seem to snap Techno out of his shock and he starts moving. Tommy tenses in anticipation, but his hand reached up and grips his mask instead of an axe, carefully lifting the skull off his head so that Tommy can see his face.

Tommy blinked in surprise. Techno very rarely took off his mask, it was almost as uncommon as seeing Dream without his. What was going on? Techno looked; Techno looked honestly kind of sad. His normally neutral face was staring at Tommy, his eyebrows furrowed

and a distinct look of panic written all over his face. That doesn't make any sense. Why would Techno be sad? He should be angry.

Tommy realizes that Techno's mouth is moving and his eyes snap down, staring at the shapes and trying to piece them together.

Tommy was proud to say that he could decently lip read. When he was in exile with Wilbur in Pogtopia, he would get really bored and sometimes Wilbur was a bit too much to handle, so he would sneak down to Manburg, hiding on the rooftops and staring at the people below, attempting to follow their conversations just by looking at the way their lips moved. It was a habit born out of absolute boredom. It might save him now.

Techno was talking slowly; which Tommy was grateful for.

"Can you (who? do?) hear (near?) me?" Techno said, and Tommy quickly shuffled through the possible combinations to pick the most logical one.

"Of course I can hear you, why wouldn't I be able to hear you? That's ridiculous and I don't know what you're talking about," Tommy blurts out, praying that he guessed that right. Lip reading was far from an exact science. Techno just stares at him, eyes widening the longer Tommy talked. "Bitch," He adds to the end for good luck.

"You can't (slant?) hear me," Techno flinched back, carefully stumbling to his feet as he stared at Tommy in shock. Tommy feels like puking.

Techno can't find out; Techno can't learn that. It put his already slim chances of living down by a lot. He looks away, opening his mouth to protest once again before Techno's suddenly reaching towards him, palm open and Tommy knows what that means, flinching away violently before the slap could connect.

Except Techno pauses as Tommy flails backwards, pathetically crawling back a few feet to get away. His cheeks burn with embarrassment. Shit, why did he do that? Dream never liked it when he flinched away, when he refused to just accept the hit for what it was. Tommy freezes again, deciding to just not move and let whatever happens to him happen. He's too tired to care at this point. He doesn't know how to stop messing up.

Techno and him just kind of stare at each other for a long time, neither of them moving as snow starts to fall around them once more. Tommy's kind of cold. He hopes he can freeze to this spot forever. Become a cool looking ice sculpture for any of Techno's visitors to gape at.

Techno's moving again, and Tommy tenses, expecting a hit, but all Techno does is slowly crouch down to his level, slowly reaching out a hand, palm facing up. He stops a couple feet in front of Tommy, nowhere close to striking distance. Tommy stares at it for a long moment before snapping his eyes back up to Techno.

As soon as his brother notices him looking at him he's speaking again, mouth moving slowly and clearly.

“Let’s- inside,” Techno says. Tommy misses the second word, but he's not stupid. He knows what Techno's telling him to do. Tommy really wishes he could hear Techno’s voice. Was that an annoyed sounding request? Was it an order? Was there a promise of pain if he refused? He had no idea, and Techno’s face was blank again, giving away nothing.

But he doesn’t seem like he’s going to kill him at this minute, and Tommy’s suddenly very tired. It’s been a stressful hour of wakefulness. He just wants to rest. He wants to sleep forever. Maybe jump off a cliff. He’ll figure it out later.

For now, he pushes himself up, ignoring Techno’s hand as he ducks his head and walks back towards the cabin.

## Chapter End Notes

There it is!! Next chapter is in Techno's perspective, so you guys finally get his proper reaction to the entire thing. It might not be out for a little bit, I'm in the last couple of weeks of my semester and writing my diplomas soon so I need to focus more on that :) Thank you guys so much for all your lovely comments, I really do love reading them. I hope you guys have a wonderful day/night!! <3

# **This once, and then we can forget**

## Chapter Summary

Techno just wanted to go home and take a nap. So of course as soon as his house is in view he sees his injured little brother making a run for it. His shit luck was starting to get out of hand.

## Chapter Notes

This chapter totally got away from me lol. It's like, twice as long as it was supposed to be but that's fine!! Have some good ole Techno angst!!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Techno was having an incredibly bad day.

He got forcibly kidnapped from his house, his horse was held hostage, Phil was apparently now on house arrest, and he was almost executed without trial.

He goes into retirement, gives up all his violent ways, and this is how he's treated? This is the entire reason Techno went against the government in the first place! He wasn't given any options, he had no rights, no nothing. They just grabbed him and murdered him. They would have succeeded too, if not for the totem he held in his pocket.

And even though it saved his life, he still felt slimy for having to use it. The stink of dark magic was crawling through his veins, and it almost felt like a potion gone wrong, his insides all jumbled up and organs tied together. Not much fun.

At least he got to kill Quackity. That was fun.

Either way, Techno was pissed. It had been an extremely shitty day, and he was genuinely debating unretiring and killing everyone in that stupid fucking cabinet. First, he had to focus on getting home.

It seems just his luck that as soon as he is able to see the familiar shape of his house, he is also able to see the familiar shape of his younger brother catching sight of him and fucking sprinting away as fast as he could.

Which wasn't that fast, if Techno was being honest.

“Oh you got to be kidding me,” Techno sighed, kicking Carl to go a bit faster. Carl raced the last couple of steps, and Techno jumped down to the ground, stomping towards where he saw Tommy run. The kid shouldn’t even be moving, Techno didn’t take that long did he? The potion should still be in effect for at least a couple more hours.

“Tommy!” He shouts out at his brother retreating back. The kid looked horrible. He was wrapped up in Techno’s clothes that looked about ten sizes too big for him, hanging off his body and practically engulfing him. There were still large eye bags under his eyes and his skin was deathly pale from what Techno could see. If he managed to open up any of his wounds Techno could be pissed. He did not have the patience for this today. “Tommy get back here you idiot.”

Tommy ignores him, doesn’t even react to the words. Stubborn little prick. Techno tries not to laugh when Tommy stumbles and falls into a hole left there from a couple of mobs a few months ago. That probably hurt, but it had stopped his desperate escape so he decided to look at the bright side of things. And what kind of brother would he be if he didn’t laugh a little every time his brother fell?

“You know, I house you, I clothe you, I bring you back from being half-dead, and in return you try to run away, ungrateful little gremlin,” Techno stands above him, placing his hands on his hips and looking down at his brother, who just stares at him pathetically. “Are you ignoring me?”

Tommy doesn’t say anything. That’s odd. Tommy should at this point be swearing up a storm and insulting Techno at every turn, not just staring at him with wide eyes. Was Tommy ignoring him? He was staring right at him.

“You’re ignoring me, huh,” Techno said, rolling his eyes. Of course Tommy was being a problem, Techno’s pretty sure his brother isn’t sure how not to be. Tommy still doesn’t reply to him. Little shit. “Oh my god he’s ignoring me.”

Techno reached down, grabbing at Tommy’s cape in order to pull him out of the hole, making sure to be as gentle as possible. Tommy probably aggravated all his wounds when making his mad dash for freedom. He plopped his little brother out of the hole, setting him on the snowy ground.

“Now come on, you can ignore me all you want but it’s freezing out here and I was almost just murdered, so I would appreciate getting inside,” Techno said, brushing off his hands and looking down at his brother. But Tommy wasn’t responding, Tommy looked terrified.

What?

That was weird. Tommy was staring at him with wide eyes, swallowing hard and opening and closing his mouth, like he was debating whether or not to say something. Techno tapped his foot impatiently, waiting for whatever his brother was trying to get out, ignoring the nervous energy crawling at his back.

***WrongSomethingswrongTommy’squiet?***

***EQuietinnitSomethinghastobewrongIshehurtCheckhimoverBloodforthebloodgodYoucouldj***

## *ustdraghimbackinPokehimmaybe?EOhmygodwhatifhe'sbrokenBigbrotherTechnoE*

"I'm sorry," Tommy blurted out, his voice so obnoxiously loud that it caused Techno to flinch back a bit, startled at the sudden noise. Tommy flinched back too, but seemed unable to stop now that the first few words had come rushing out. "Sorry, I was going! I promise I didn't take much, or anything, um, I kind of did but I'll give it back if you want it! It was just lying there so I thought you wouldn't care much you know?"

"Tommy what are you going on about-" Techno tried to say, feeling a bit uncomfortable with this situation. Tommy never apologized for anything, and why was he slurring his words so bad? Tommy was loud, but never so loud it was like he was shouting. Tommy continued on as if Techno hadn't spoken.

"You're a bitch anyways. But I was on my way, so you don't have to worry about me!" Tommy was breathing faster, clearly starting to wind himself up into a panic.

"Shut up," Techno tried, growling as his hands clenched into a fist. Tommy didn't react at all, almost like Techno wasn't there.

"Just let me go on my merry way and everything will be fine. Just please don't kill me?" Tommy was looking up at him, mouth finally snapping shut and he curled into himself. For such a tall kid, he really could compact himself well.

Techno wasn't sure how to respond to that. At all. What the hell? Tommy thought he was going to kill him? Which, reasonable given their last few interactions, but Techno gave him a home! He helped heal him! Tommy would literally be dead if it wasn't for him.

And why was he speaking so weird? Did he hit his head? Techno looked for any type of head injury, there was no bumps or cuts. Did he miss something? Oh, Techno was going to be pissed if Tommy managed to get a severe concussion without him noticing, putting him under the sleeping potion could have made things so much worse, and that's not a mistake that Techno liked to make.

And the ignoring him? Techno could chalk that up to Tommy just being a pain in the ass, but that was ridiculous.

And now the kid was hyperventilating, great. Techno was going to have to comfort him.

"Hey," He said awkwardly, wondering how rude it would be if he just turned and left. Tommy would probably run again, and Techno needed him, so that was out of the book. Guess he needed to actually make an effort. Exhausting. "Hey, kid you're alright. I'm not that mad about the stealing, I'd actually be more alarmed if you didn't try to steal something. I know we haven't had the best past, but you need help and I'm the only one who can provide that for you. I'm not going to let you die out here alone and I'm not going to hurt you. I promise. Let's just go inside and calm down okay?"

He thinks he did a pretty good job, he made sure his voice was softer than usual, he didn't yell or say anything passive-aggressive at all, and he even allowed the tiniest bit of affection to shine through. All in all, some of the best comforting he's ever done.

Tommy doesn't seem to think so, because the boy is just staring at him now. Just completely empty-eyed staring. Techno hates how dull his eyes looked. Tommy always had unusually bright blue eyes, but now they were more of a dull gray. Techno shifts uneasily.

"Take a picture," Tommy mumbled, his words crashing into each other. "It'll last longer."

That made no sense at all. What was Tommy talking about? Techno was starting to get very concerned over the idea of brain damage.

"Tommy, why are you ignoring me?" Techno says, hating the way his voice comes out sort of panicked. Tommy doesn't reply. Just keeps staring at him. "Tommy? What's going on, you can tell me kid. Just let me know what's wrong and I'll try to fix it."

Tommy doesn't respond. Just keeps staring at him with those awful dead eyes. Something was wrong. Something was very wrong. Why was Tommy ignoring him like this? It made no sense. There was a missing piece here that was driving Techno insane. What had happened to Tommy?

"Tommy? He asks again. No reaction. "Tommy, are you listening?"

Still nothing. He doesn't even blink. It's like he doesn't even hear him or something.

No.

Wait.

Techno sucks in a deep breath, the voices completely silencing in his head as his memory provided him with an overlooked detail of the previous night.

Blood trickling down Tommy's neck, seeming to come from no source, right below both his ears.

Techno thinks he might throw up.

The voices click back into his mind, overwhelming him with their jumbling voices, overlapping themselves and interrupting each other, a symphony of noise that makes it hard for Techno to think any rational thought.

"Tommy," He says, his voice hard and serious. Tommy doesn't move. "Can you hear me?"

His younger brother says nothing, just keeps staring at him. Like he doesn't know what Techno's saying. Like he can't hear. *He can't hear.*

Techno's going to murder someone. As soon as he knows for sure who the hell did this he was going to go tear their head off and toss it into the ocean. Maybe that was too kind. Techno knew many ways of killing a man, some of them he even swore to only do under dire circumstances.

Someone stealing away his little brother's hearing would be one of them.



Techno forces himself to calm down. He needs to focus. He doesn't know anything for sure, he's just going off of a guess that seems very likely. And Tommy looks terrified out of his mind. This wasn't about Techno. He couldn't be selfish at a time like this.

Slowly, Techno reached up, gripping at his familiar boar mask and carefully taking it off. He ignored the roll of discomfort that came with taking it off, and Tommy looked just as surprised, confusion starting to bloom on his face.

"Tommy, can you hear?" Techno asks calmly. Tommy doesn't react at all. Then, Techno watches as his eyes snap down to Techno's lips. Techno barely breathes as he asks again. "Tommy? Can you hear me?"

Tommy blinks, his eyes briefly glazing over with panic before it's gone, an easy smile pulling at his lips. It looks fake. It makes his stomach twist.

"Of course I can hear you, why wouldn't I be able to hear you? That's ridiculous and I don't know what you're talking about," Tommy says. Techno feels his throat drop into his stomach. Holy shit. Tommy couldn't hear him. Tommy couldn't fucking hear. "Bitch," His brother adds on, but it's almost too soft for Techno to hear, almost like Tommy had no idea how loud or quiet he was being.

"You can't hear," Techno said, stumbling back against his will. He isn't sure how to deal with this, he doesn't know what to do. He could deal with cuts and burns, could remove pieces of metal from skin and carefully piece it back together. He could carefully warm up hypothermic skin and deal with frostbite. He knew war, he knew blood, he knew pain. But this? How could he deal with this? How could he help Tommy through this? Through the loss of one of his senses?

Techno has never felt more lost. He's never felt more useless. It's like his entire world was screeching to a stop while also going a million miles per hour.

He should have been more concerned about the blood. He should have known right away what it meant. He was caught up in the panic of all the other injuries that he pushed it aside. He should have known, maybe if he caught it earlier there would have been a way to fix it. Then Tommy wouldn't be sitting here in the snow, terrified and clearly having no idea what was going on.

Stop. He needs to stop. Overthinking won't help Tommy. He needs to focus on his brother right now.

Tommy was looking away, opening his mouth to say something else. Techno carefully reached out, intending to gently grab Tommy's face and guide him until he was looking at Techno and could read his lips again.

The second Tommy saw it he was suddenly crying out, flinching backwards as hard as he could, arm raising and eyes widening as if expecting something else. As if he was expecting Techno to hit him.

The anger flares up again. Techno pushes it down quite violently. He takes it and locks it far away. No time for thinking. No time for pondering over the implications of his little brother showing up cut and bruised, having lost his hearing and flinching away as if someone had been hitting him.

Techno freezes, barely even breathing as Tommy stares at him with wide frightened eyes. Techno flinches back slightly as a low keening noise falls from Tommy's lips. Techno was a hunter; he knew that sound well. It was the cry of an injured and scared animal, begging a predator to leave it alone or at least kill it quickly and cleanly. Tommy doesn't even seem aware he's making it. Techno wants to be sick. For the first time in a very long time, he wants to cry.

He makes himself go very still, barely even breathing as Tommy stares at him, his breathing harsh and the low whine slowly dying down. Techno isn't sure how long it takes, it feels like hours but was probably only minutes, before Tommy finally relaxes a tiny bit. The whine had died out, but Techno can still hear it echoing around his ears. He thinks it'll haunt his dreams.

He had never heard his brother make any noise like that. Tommy was usually so loud, so full of life. If he was scared he hid it with loud swears and carefully crafted words falling from his lips. That noise was none of that. It was a low, pathetic sounding whine. Almost instinctual. It was the cry of a broken boy trying his best not to react to whatever overwhelming fear he was feeling.

Slowly, as if to not startle him, Techno reached out a hand. He keeps the palm up, as innocent and unthreatening as he could make it. Tommy stares at it, carefully tracking the motion. Techno stops with his arm half held out, a few feet in front of Tommy. Even if he wanted to- he would never the very thought of it makes him want to run away and never look back- Techno wouldn't be able to strike him. Tommy stares at it for a very long time. Techno forces himself to be patient over the overwhelming panic and grief tearing through him.

Finally, Tommy raises his eyes towards his face.

"Let's go inside," Techno said slowly, making sure to overly pronounce his words. Tommy blinks, frowning slightly before shaking himself off, easily ignoring the hand before pulling himself up to his shaky legs and turning his back, hunching down and walking away fast. Techno lets him get the head start, not wanting to startle him again.

He watches Tommy's slow walk, his legs shaking with the effort. Techno surprised he doesn't fall. He should be completely out of it at this point. That potion should have kept him out for a few more hours at least. Tommy was always a stubborn bitch.

He sits in the snow, the cold starting to melt through his crappy iron armor as he sat there, staring at the white ground. His thoughts are racing, going almost too fast for him to focus on. The chat was still screaming. He can't even hear what they're saying, it's just a spam of noises at this point, incomprehensible words.

He gets up and walks towards the house, entering and carefully taking off his armor, removing the restrictive pieces of protection. He wants his own armor back, the familiar feeling of them around his limbs, crafted specifically for him in mind. He could use the

familiarity when dealing with this. He doesn't think he's ever been so lost when dealing with something.

He takes a deep breath, walking into the kitchen and clocking Tommy's location. The kid was sitting at the kitchen table, his head staring down at the table. Techno wasn't fooled, he could feel Tommy's eyes on him, carefully tracking him across the room. Techno made sure not to make any sudden movements towards him.

He places his kettle on the stove and warms up some water, grabbing some honey from a shelf and a tea blend that he made himself from plants Phil brought during his last visit. God, he hopes Phil breaks his house arrest and comes down here. Techno could really use him.

Finally, the kettle whistles and he pours out two mugs, carefully steeping it and sweetening his tea. He adds a couple drops into Tommy's as well. He isn't sure how much Tommy likes, but he can guess. He'll bring the honey pot over just in case.

Finally, the tea is ready and he no longer has an excuse for putting this off. He doesn't know what he's going to say, doesn't know what he needs to do. He's never prepared for this situation, never thought something like this could happen.

Jesus Tommy was just a kid. A very annoying one, but still a kid. He shouldn't be dealing with something like hearing loss. Techno was going to murder whoever did this. His hands are shaking with the barely suppressed rage swirling inside of him.

He walks to the table, sitting down across from his brother and sliding the mug over, carefully lifting his own and taking a sip. Tommy stares at him with narrowed eyes, and Techno gestures to his mug pointedly. Tommy rolled his eyes, picking up the mug and taking a careful sip, eyes slipping closed. The kid looked exhausted.

"You can't hear me," Techno said, making sure Tommy's eyes were still shut. His brother doesn't respond, doesn't even make any indication of hearing him.

Shit. He really was deaf.

Looking back at everything Techno knew, he could connect the dots. Burns, cuts, loss of hearing. It had to be a series of explosions that somehow ruptured his eardrum or something like that. Fuck Techno knew nothing about hearing loss. Techno was going to kill Dream. It had to be Dream right? Nothing else made sense. No one else would go that far.

Techno waits for Tommy to finish his drink, the two of them sitting in complete silence. Techno wishes he knew what his brother was thinking.

"What are you going to do to me?" Tommy suddenly asks, his voice overly loud. Techno must make a face without realizing, because Tommy curled into himself, face darkening. Techno looked around, eyes catching on a piece of paper and a pencil lying on the counter. He stands and grabs it, quickly returning back.

He starts writing, Tommy leaning slightly closer to get a closer look.

*I found you outside after hearing you scream. Treated you for hypothermia and all the other cuts. Got a bit sidetracked and had to put you downstairs while I left. What happened?*

It wasn't a good explanation, in fact, it cut out at least half of the events that happened, but Techno couldn't bring himself to care. He needed to know what happened, needed to know who did this.

Tommy's face darkened, eyes casting downwards and shoulders curling up.

"I made a mistake," Tommy said, his voice a lot softer than before. Everything about it was just so wrong. Tommy never admitted to doing anything wrong. As far as the kid was aware, he was perfect and could do no wrong. So why had he apologized earlier? Why had he flinched like he did? Why was he admitting to doing something wrong?

What could Tommy have possibly done so wrong that it warranted this reaction? Techno can't think of a thing. He can't brainstorm a single thing that a literal child could have done to deserve getting his hearing taken away like this.

He waits, but Tommy seems to be done, staring at the table. Techno's about to ask him again when he realizes Tommy's shaking. Techno looks a bit closer, pushing back the voices demanding blood and justice to really check his brother over.

Tommy looks like shit. He's shaking like a leaf, hands clenched in his lap, and every part of him tensed. He was terrified. Tommy's eyes were dropping from exhaustion, swaying slightly in his chair every couple of seconds. He looked seconds away from passing out. Techno also notices a tiny drop of blood seeping through his shirt by his shoulder. Shit.

He would have to get answers later. Vengeance could wait, his brother's health could not. He grabs the piece of paper again.

*Okay. I need to look over your wounds again, I think you managed to reopen some of the cuts. Where do things hurt?*

He shoves the paper at his brother, who reads it and frowns.

"I'm perfectly fine bitch," Tommy insists, pointedly not looking at Techno. "Nothing can hurt a big man like me."

Techno taps his hand on the table sharply, the vibrations making Tommy jump and look at him with startled eyes. Techno raises an eyebrow and Tommy deflates a bit.

"My shoulder hurts," He admits miserably. "My head too. Everything else is manageable."

Which was code for pretty much everything hurt, but my shoulder and head are almost unbearable. Techno sighed, standing up and walking to get his supplies.

He gathers everything and moves to the table, gesturing for Tommy to move the chair out to the side. His brother does so with minimal grumbling, still holding himself very still, like he was preparing himself to run.

First thing Techno does is move towards Tommy's ears. The boy flinches and smacks at him, lips pulled up into a snarl. Techno levels him with an unimpressed look. He needs to see if this is something temporary or not. After a few seconds of their stare down Tommy finally looks away, ducking his head and reaching up with shaking hands to tuck his long hair behind his ears.

"You get too rough and I will start stabbing you," Tommy mutters under his breath. Techno has no doubt that he will.

He takes his time peering into his brother's ear. The problem was that Techno didn't know a lot about hearing loss. He had seen soldiers lose their hearing in battles, but it was things that only ended with a constant ringing or temporary loss. Tommy's didn't look like that. Techno could see that there was damage, way deep in the back of the ear where Techno couldn't see.

Techno knew it was likely that it was Tommy's inner ear that had either been ruptured or shattered. He also knew that the likelihood of Tommy coming back from that was low. Way too low.

Techno sat up, carefully not looking at Tommy as he clenched and unclenched his fists. Tommy most likely would never hear again. His little brother had his hearing stolen from him and-

And Techno can't think about it anymore. He shoves those thoughts way deep into the back of his mind. He needs to focus on Tommy's other injuries then getting him to bed. Then he can think about the implications of that.

Tommy opened his mouth, probably to ask what Techno saw, but something made him snap it back shut. The kid didn't want to know, he probably wanted to hold onto the last shred of hope he had. Techno couldn't bring himself to shatter it. Instead, Techno carefully mimed taking off the cape and the shirt, not wanting to do it himself without warning and send Tommy spiraling again.

"Buy me dinner first," Tommy joked half-heartedly, and Techno let out a snort simply out of pity. Tommy seemed to relax a bit more at the eyeroll he gave, so Techno figured he did something right. Tommy quickly took off the cape and then pulled his good arm through the shirt, face screwing up in pain when his other shoulder wouldn't move the way he wanted to.

Techno reached out to help, but the second his hands made contact with his brother Tommy was flinching back, mouth opened in a snarl.

"I can do it myself dickhead, don't fucking touch me," He snapped, hands shaking again as he practically ripped the shirt off, his face screwing up in pain at the movement. Techno restrained the urge to snap at him for such a stupid stunt. Why could Tommy never accept any help? Why did he insist on being some unbreakable force like he wasn't human? Techno might never know. He forces himself to take a deep breath, reminding himself about how miserable Tommy looked and how making that worse wouldn't help either of them.

He focuses on checking him over. He works on the shoulder first; the bandage having been soaked through with blood. He carefully peeled the bandage away, muttering apologies

whenever Tommy flinched. He wasn't sure why. Wasn't like Tommy could hear him.

The voices scream. Techno pushes them down.

He frowns at the cut, which has once again reopened and is bleeding sluggishly. He thought it would be okay with just some potion and rest, but it hadn't seemed to get better at all. He carefully tapped Tommy's shoulder, drawing his eyes to him.

"I'm going to have to sew it up," Techno tells him, trying his best to speak clearly. Tommy blinks, face scrunching up in confusion.

"What?" Tommy asks, blinking slowly. "What are you throwing up?"

"Sewing?" Techno says again, but Tommy just stares at him. He sighs, reaching over and grabbing the piece of paper, quickly scribbling the sentence out. Tommy looks down, reading it quickly.

"That makes more sense," Tommy muttered. Techno doesn't think he was supposed to hear it. "Go ahead big man, just don't fuck it up anymore okay?"

"You're the one who fucked it up by moving around," Techno protested, but Tommy was already looking away. Techno just rolled his eyes and grabbed his supplies, threading the needle and grabbing some numbing potions. He rubbed around the area, letting the bright purple potion soak in before standing up to go wash his hands.

When he got back he figured the area was numb enough for him to start working. This was far from the first cut he had ever sewn up. It wasn't rare that a wound was just too wide to close properly with just the help of a potion. Stitching it up before applying the potion always helped speed along the process.

Tommy flinched slightly with every pull of the needle, shaking with the effort to stay still. Techno knew it hurt, even with the numbing on it. He tried not to feel guilty about that. Luckily it wasn't that large of a slice, so he finished with only a few stitches.

"There you go," Techno muttered, cleaning the wound and splashing some healing potions on it before wrapping it back up. "Just going to check all the other ones too."

Tommy showed no reaction to the words, but seemed to get the idea when Techno started poking other places of his body. He was tense and grumbled every couple of seconds, but mostly let Techno work in peace.

Everything else seemed fine, but Techno was a bit worried about the fact that he could still clearly see all of Tommy's ribs. The kid was clearly malnourished, his recovery would be impacted by that.

Techno held up a palm to symbol Tommy staying put before he stood up and wandered through the kitchen, grabbing an old baked potato from a couple nights ago. It wasn't that old and smelled fine, so he quickly warmed it up before bringing it to his brother, grabbing a fork and miming lifting the food to his mouth before passing it to him. Tommy stared at it with

barely concealed disgust before looking up at Techno with raised eyebrows. Techno mimed eating again, this time firmer.

“I’m not hungry,” Tommy said stubbornly. Techno made the motion again. Tommy huffed a sigh, rolling his eyes and shoveling a bite into his mouth. His face scrunched up in disgust, eyes shutting closed as if the taste of the food on his lips was too much to handle. Techno feared that it was.

Tommy managed two more bites before he was pushing it away, eye begging Techno not to make him do it again. Techno sighed, he had hoped for more, but if Tommy hadn’t been eating well the process of getting him healthy would take a lot longer than a couple of minutes.

Techno takes back the food, carefully lifting it off the plate before walking over and opening his front window, chucking the food onto the ground in front of Carl, who snorted in thanks before wolfing it down. Techno shook his head fondly, turning back to his brother and wondering what the hell to do next. Tommy was staring at him with the same dull eyes as before, tensed up so tightly that Techno thinks he might go flying like a rubber band.

“What do you want from me?” Tommy asks, his voice shaking. Techno wonders if Tommy is aware of it. He won’t go pointing it out anyways.

Techno grabs the paper once again, knowing that was the easiest way to communicate with his brother. Lip reading was finicky.

*Go to sleep, you’re healing. We can have a proper chat when you wake up.*

He pauses, hand hovering over the end of his sentence before he added on the last few words.

*You’re safe here.*

He shoved it at his brother before he could regret it, turning and walking back to the kitchen to clean everything up. He can’t hear Tommy behind him for a few minutes before he hears a loud sigh and some shuffling. When he turns back around Tommy had put on his shirt and was wrapping the cape around himself, burrowing into the warmth before hobbling over to the couch, collapsing on it and immediately closing his eyes. He seemed to fall asleep within minutes. Techno really has no clue how the kid stayed upright for so long.

With Tommy asleep again and Techno no longer having anything to do or focus on, the exhaustion hits him as well. He can’t push his thoughts away anymore without anything else to think about.

Tommy was deaf.

Techno never saw himself as much of a brother figure. That was never really his thing. Tommy was six when Phil found him on the street, and Techno was a sixteen-year-old kid who really only knew Phil through their work together in the Antarctic Empire. Techno wasn’t sure when he started considering them family, but he’s pretty sure it’s when a seven-

year-old Tommy grabbed his cape and called him his favorite older brother since Wilbur was pissing him off.

Either way, Techno wasn't around much. Neither was Phil. Tommy was raised half by himself and half by Wilbur when Wilbur wasn't off making his own family. But that didn't mean that Techno and he weren't close. Because of how rarely Techno visited, Tommy always clung to him when he was around. They spent all their time together when Techno was in town.

Training, farming, just sitting and listening to each other talk. Techno maybe saw Tommy twice every couple of months, and both of them cherished those visits more than anything. Techno could pretend to be annoyed by the kid's energy and obnoxious personality, but Tommy really did have a bad habit of worming his way into everyone's heart. And he was more than aware that Tommy looked up to him more than anything.

The relationship took a downwards spiral as Tommy got older and more independent, as he learned that eight-year-old kids shouldn't be left on their own and that his family had a bad habit of practically abandoning him most of his life. Techno watched as the childlike joy in Tommy's eyes turned restrained whenever Techno showed up, as if he knew that the visit wouldn't last. Like he was stopping himself from getting attached because he knew it would hurt more when they left.

And Techno always left, even when he didn't want to. The one thing Techno had ever resented Phil for was the fact that the man didn't seem to understand that they were hurting Wilbur and Tommy. That every birthday or Christmas they missed pushed the wedge in their family in deeper. Techno tried to mention it more than once, but Phil had always shrugged, saying that Tommy and Wilbur had each other and that was enough. Techno was fully aware that every time he left Tommy behind, he hurt his brother more. But he didn't know how to stop. Didn't know how to be the older brother he should have been.

He thought that it was fine if he separated himself more, because if he was never there, then Tommy wouldn't get hurt. He thought Wilbur would have been enough.

And now here Techno sat, staring at the sleeping form of his brother and having no idea how to reach out, how to provide the comfort and support that Tommy needed.

Tommy had lost his hearing. One of his senses was ripped away from him in possibly one of the cruelest ways. And somehow, for some reason, Tommy seemed to think it was his fault. Techno had long since forgotten the art of speaking to his youngest brother, but he liked to think he still knew Tommy fairly well.

Tommy would never apologize for anything he did unless it really hurt someone. Tommy would never blame himself for others' actions or mistakes. And even if he did, he would never so openly admit it. Tommy also wasn't so quiet. He wasn't so thin. He wasn't so flighty. He never before flinched at sudden movements or watched Techno with suspicious but resigned eyes. He never stared at Techno like he was a bomb waiting to go off.

Something happened to Tommy, something horrible and disgusting. Techno doesn't even want to think what kind of monster would take a kid's hearing away and make them believe



they deserved it. But then again, what kind of monster unleashed withers onto his already grieving little brother to prove a point?

Techno stood up, walking outside into the snow. He grabbed his flimsy iron axe from the side of his belt and headed towards the forest.

He walked into the forest until he was a decent while away before lifting the axe up and striking the first tree he saw, all his anger and pain released in those few swings.

He knew why he did what he did. Why he kicked the already fallen L'Manburg while it was down. Techno would never feel bad for that, would never regret his actions. But he also could acknowledge that maybe there were better ways to solve that problem that didn't involve a speech where he indirectly told Tommy to die.

He was trying to teach Tommy a lesson, to warn him that nothing good ever came to heroes, that all they did was suffer and die. He couldn't watch his youngest brother get beaten down and ruined by those around him because of his own stupid stubbornness.

And isn't that what was happening to Tommy now? Christ, Tommy was just a kid. Techno sometimes forgot himself, after years of knowing Tommy was pretty much self-sufficient and then later fighting in wars. But Tommy was just sixteen. He shouldn't have to be doing these things. He shouldn't have to be punished in the way that he was.

He didn't deserve to have his hearing stolen from him. He didn't deserve to be so beaten down and ruined. And something inside of Techno screamed at the idea of someone hurting his little brother like that. The same little brother that beamed whenever Techno agreed to read him stories and would act out his favorite Greek myths in order to make Techno smile.

There was always something so uniquely bright and innocent that always shone in Tommy. Something that Techno saw and immediately clocked as a threat to both Tommy and everyone else. But now that it was gone, extinguished with flames and the boom of TNT, Techno would do anything to get it back. He would do anything to see Tommy smile like he did when he was younger.

But he can't do that. He doesn't know how to fix this and he doesn't think he ever will. He can barely have a conversation with Tommy without it becoming overly hostile, the two of them at each other's throats. Tommy knew how to push his buttons and Techno fell for it every time. How was he supposed to help Tommy heal? To learn how to survive with this new disability that he shouldn't have been saddled with?

The tree in front of him fell with a mighty crash and Techno fell to his knees, gritting his teeth.

He was just so tired. Tired of fighting, of being hunted, of not knowing if he was safe. He wanted Phil. He wanted Wilbur. He wanted his family back with him and supporting him just like they used to. He wanted to feel safe, he wanted to feel in control.

His bare hands landed in the snow, the cold burning his skin as he knelt on his knees, head hanging low. He opened his mouth and screamed, letting out all his frustration and anger.

Everything that had been festering since finding Tommy, since almost getting executed, since learning about Tommy's disability. He opened his mouth and screamed in anger, fear, and pain because he knew no one was around to hear him. The closest person wasn't able to even if he woke up. Tommy would keep sleeping through Techno's screams because he *couldn't hear a fucking thing*.

Tommy couldn't hear and Techno was struck by the overwhelming unfairness of the situation. Why Tommy? Why him? Why his family? Techno felt like crying. He felt like screaming and raging and tearing off someone's head.

He knew that when he went back to that cabin he'd have to be strong. He'd have to learn how to adapt to Tommy's situation and teach Tommy how to survive with it. He'd have to be the older brother he always wanted to be but shied away from out of fear of rejection.

It wasn't just for him anymore. He can't be selfish any longer. This was for Tommy. For the young boy who looked up to him. For the boy in Pogtopia who was beaten down at every turn but still gritted his teeth in determination and tried to save everyone. For the deaf kid who was scared and traumatized sleeping on Techno's couch.

Techno stood up and walked back to the house. He entered through the doors and sighed at the warmth that started to seep back into his bones. He dropped his axe by the door and walked over towards a sleeping Tommy.

He looked so peaceful like that, bundled up in Techno's spare coat, bandages covering him but face slack. There was no tension on his face, he was sleeping completely uninterrupted, free from the pain and fear that he seemed to radiate when awake.

Techno carefully reached out, gently brushing the greasy blonde hair away from his face. Tommy muttered something illegible and curled into himself more, hands clutching the cape like a teddy bear. Something inside Techno melts away. Any anger from the way Tommy treated him in Pogtopia, any leftover resentment Techno held evaporated. There would be a time to address that, to talk about the fact that he felt used and thrown away by his brothers, the way it hurt to see the hate in Tommy's eyes, to see the insanity in Wilbur's. But that time wasn't now.

"I'm sorry Tommy," He said gruffly, well aware that the boy would never hear him. "I'll protect you from now on okay? No one will ever be able to hurt you like this again. I promise you that. I'll do my best kid."

Techno took his hand back, turning away from his younger brother and taking a deep breath.

He needed a nap. Too much introspection was exhausting.

Techno: finally makes good attempts at comforting and apologizing to his brother.  
Tommy: can't even fucking hear him lol. Anyways, I got way too carried away with Techno's little monologue, I just really wanted to highlight the lack of control he felt about this situation and the anger he's feeling over the shock of his little brother losing his hearing. A lot of his coping mechanisms revolve around justifying his own actions or shoving any guilt or regret down deep inside of him and it's not healthy, but that's just how he is. My favorite part of this AU is that now that there's a bit of a communication barrier, it will eventually force these two to properly talk their problems out without interruptions or screaming lol.

How are we all feeling about that finale huh? Personally, I thought it was amazing and I have so many thoughts about it. I'm so glad that they won in the end and Tubbo didn't die lol. Also may I say I will always believe in Punz supremacy.

I also now can't stop thinking about the possibility of an immortal Tommy and Dream AU where the reason why Dream's doing all of this is to teach new immortal Tommy that having those attachments as an immortal does nothing but hurt them and that's why he's always saying cryptid things like "our story will never be over" and things like that. I might write a series on it but I'm also not sure if I should be writing two series at once in the middle of the school year lol. I just think the idea is really compelling and I've literally just been thinking of lore for that AU ever since the stream happened. Anyways, I will stop rambling and I hope you guys are all having an amazing day/night!! <3

# Cause he's just a little attention attractor

## Chapter Summary

Techno makes a friend

## Chapter Notes

I'm so sorry this chapter took so long!! I sprained my wrist so it was hard to type, and then my Microsoft word decided to be a bitch and delete the entire finished chapter as well as all the planning I had for future chapters. So I've been scrambling the past few days to re-write this chapter and remember everything else lol. To be completely honest this chapter isn't as good as the first version, but I'm tired of staring at it. It was a bit of a filler anyways, I just wanted to introduce Ranboo to the plot since he's going to be playing a big role :) anyways!! I hope you enjoy!!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Techno's blood was still pumping with adrenaline when he got up the next morning. The sleep had done nothing to quench the bloodlust and anger rushing through his veins. All it did was make him groggier and a bit more grouchy.

He was still worked up from the whole execution thing, not to mention the revelation of Tommy's predicament. So much had happened in the span of only a couple of days, and it was starting to catch up with him. Techno was no stranger to being in many high stress moments in a short amount of time, but normally when he went into those he had time to mentally prepare, time to gather his thoughts and get himself into the right headspace.

There was no way to prepare for your younger brother showing up deaf and injured, and then being taken hostage and killed. Especially when you were minding your business for the first time in your life. This was supposed to be a relaxing retirement.

The anger is bubbling up inside of him, the voices screaming out for blood and revenge. Normally, he would have no qualms about doing so. In fact, he was a bit surprised by the fact that he wasn't already planning revenge on L'Manburg for what they did to him. They deserved it after all, and he was known for revenge.

But that wasn't his priority at the moment. As much as it unsettled him, he couldn't put revenge first. He had Tommy to think about.

Techno wasn't unaware of the struggles that both him and Tommy were going to be facing. Losing your hearing unexpectedly was jarring. There would be communication troubles, adjustment issues, mental handicaps that would be hard to get past. And Techno had no idea how to do any of that. He really was underprepared for all of this.

That doesn't mean he isn't willing to try. The idea of throwing Tommy to someone who did know what to do was enticing, but he didn't know who that was. Tommy was exiled from L'Manburg, so none of them would help. And Dream was the asshole who most likely did this.

Which also brought up some uncomfortable thoughts. Especially since he now owed Dream a favor and the man had helped get him out of the execution. Techno now owed Dream a lot, and that was kind of awkward since Techno had already plotted out ten different ways to murder him.

He'd figure it out when he got there. He decided he was going to be winging a lot of things lately. All he knew was that he needed to ensure that Tommy was safe. It was the least he could do.

He had already sent Phil a message. He spent a lot of time trying to figure out the best way to word it, to ensure that Phil would come without panicking the man into doing something stupid. He had settled on something simple.

*I'm safe. Back at my house. Tommy's here with me. Come when you can.*

He didn't want to alarm Phil, the man was in house arrest, and it would probably take him a couple of days to find the best way to sneak out in order to visit them. If he mentioned that something was wrong with Tommy or how helpless he was feeling, Phil would try to leave as soon as he could. And Techno didn't want him to risk it. Techno was a big boy now; he could handle himself and the gremlin of a child for a couple of days.

He needed to keep Tommy safe, and although he had plenty of backup tools, he really only had enough for himself. They would need better armor, better tools. Techno was running horribly low on supplies. It was simply unacceptable.

He risks a quick look at Tommy and wonders if the kid would be out long enough for him to go to the nether to mine. Tommy had been exhausted the day before, and had slept throughout the entire night without any disturbances. Given the lack of nutrients and the injuries he suffered, not to mention the mental stress, he would probably be out for the entire day. Techno felt safe hedging his bets.

He got up and climbed down the ladder to rustle through his chests. Netherite mining wasn't the most fun thing to do, but Techno enjoyed it more than most. Probably had something to do with the nether once being his home. He doesn't remember much about those days, but the suffocating heat always felt nice on his skin. Most of the mobs also left him alone.

He'd need more beds. He had plenty of wool, but weirdly not enough wood. He thought he had plenty, but he had been a bit lazy about his stash as of late. He was lulled into a sense of false security with his whole retirement. He wouldn't make that same mistake again.

So he needed more netherite in order to replace his stolen armor and weapons and make some new ones for Tommy. To do that he needed wood. A nice deforestation trip never did any harm. He picked up an old diamond axe and climbed the stairs to his attic, placing the blade on his enchantment table, the air already thick with magic.

He spent the next thirty minutes carefully carving in runes and spells with the sharpened end of a lapis lazuli shard, the stink of magic clogging his throat as it hovered around him. Soon he had a newly enchanted axe, ready to cut into some trees. He felt decent about it, although it wasn't as good as the one he used to have. Whatever. He'd get that back eventually. His priorities might not be focused on destroying L'Manburg, but it was certainly a side quest.

He clipped his axe to his side belt, double-checking on Tommy before writing out a quick note to put on the table. He figured Tommy wouldn't like waking up to an empty house without an explanation. He wasn't that sure about leaving him anymore, the risk of Tommy waking up and running again was high, but the thought of sitting and doing nothing was also horrible.

So he decided to make it a quick trip, maybe move the actual nether trip to a couple of days from now, and then he walked out the door.

On the path towards his house stood two figures. The ghost of his brother, and one of the four men who tried to kill him last night.

"Techno!" Ghostbur called out. "Hi! Ranboo and I are here."

"I can see," He gritted his teeth, grabbing his axe and marching towards the teen, who immediately shrunk back, tail dancing around nervously. "Ranboo."

"Techno," The teen greeted, only sounding a tiny bit nervous. Techno looked him up and down, taking a step closer into his personal space.

"Do you have any of my items?" Techno asked, pitching his voice a bit lower and pointedly adjusting the grip on his axe. Ranboo's eyes darted from his mask to the weapon and back.

"I don't have any of them on me," Ranboo says. Techno will give it to him, his voice doesn't even shake. The frantic twist of his tail gives away his anxiety, but otherwise he doesn't seem fazed at all. Techno would have to step it up.

"I need you to give me one of my items," Techno said casually. "Or else I'm going to kill you."

Ranboo's eyes flick over to the axe and back to his mask, an unreadable expression on his face.

"That's not every nice Techno," Ghostbur chimes from the side. They both ignore him.

"I can give you an ender chest if that helps?" Techno offered, Ranboo narrowed his eyes ever so slightly.

"You won't kill me if I give you one?" Ranboo asked, ears flattening on top of his head.

“How many do you have?” Techno countered easily.

“Only the one,” Ranboo said without hesitation. Techno knew it was a lie, because him only having one made no sense in the least bit, but the lie was fairly convincing. “I’ll need an ender chest.”

Techno nods, taking a step towards his house. He almost leads the hybrid in before he remembers the teenager passed out on his couch. He stops abruptly, Ranboo almost running into him, making a questioning noise.

“Stay here,” He orders, pointing at both Ranboo and his ghostly brother who seemed to be trying to teach Friend how to sit. Ranboo gave him a weird look, but only shrugged.

It took Techno a minute to pick up the heavy chest and drag it outside, but as soon as he does Ranboo is opening it and reaching inside, taking out his helmet and tossing them onto the ground, slamming the chest back shut before Techno could get a look inside. Smart.

Techno grabbed the armor and quickly put it on, the familiar wrap of metal soothing a bit of his soul. The chat chants in pleasure.

“Pleasure doing business,” Techno grins, but Ranboo can’t see it from behind his mask. Techno’s distantly glad that he remembered to put it back on after his talk with Tommy. He might be relatively okay with showing Tommy, but anyone outside of the family was a hard no.

“Hi Techno!” Ghostbur drifted back over, smiling warmly. Techno’s insides pulled like they always did when Ghostbur displayed his poor memory issues. “Ranboo and I came to visit you.”

“I see,” Techno said, patient as ever. He needed that when it came to the ghost. He was a bit worried Ranboo was going to say something, but the hybrid took it in stride. Techno remembers Phil mentioning something about him also having memory issues. “You have a bad habit of wandering in when I don’t want you to.”

“I’m not sure what you’re talking about,” Ghostbur grinned brightly, a small spark in his eyes. Techno sometimes wondered how much of the memory loss was true and how much of it was just Ghostbur deciding to be a little shit.

“Yesterday you showed up, at the worst possible moment, then you stood over there and talked to the army who came to kill me and waved at me when I tried to hide,” Techno pointed out.

“Yeah,” Ranboo sighed. “That did happen.”

“And then I got executed,” He points out just to be a little shit. Ranboo frowns and flinches a little at the reminder.

“I was trying to make it peaceful, I promise,” Ranboo said, voice straining a little bit. That was fair, Ranboo did seem to be the only one overly hesitant and uncomfortable with

everything going on. He seemed a bit scattered at any given moment. Techno only hummed in response, the three of them standing there awkwardly.

“So anyways,” Techno cleared his throat and turned back to Ranboo, breaking the awkward moment. “The whole mercy period was only for five minutes; I’m going to need another one of my items back now or else I’ll kill you.”

Ranboo backed up a bit, but Techno didn’t let him get any space. His tail flickered uncomfortably close to him, and for a second Techno thought it was going to smack him. It didn’t, instead wrapping around Ranboo’s ankle. Techno’s reminded of his own tail hidden by his massive cape. It was nice to see a hybrid not trying so hard to hide themselves.

“Will it only be for another five minutes?” Ranboo asked, sounding more annoyed than anything. Normally Techno’s threats gained a bit more fear than this.

“I’ll tell you what, this time? Ten minutes,” He offered. Ranboo rolled his eyes. Damn teenagers and their attitudes. Either way, Ranboo walks over to the chest and tosses Techno his armored pants. Techno grins behind the mask and switches out the old for the new.

“We should go inside,” Ghostbur proposes. “It looks like it might snow soon and I don’t want to melt.”

Techno freezes a bit at the offer, knowing he can’t let either of them into his house. He doesn’t fully trust Ranboo, and Ghostbur was a bit of a loose cannon at this point.

“I was actually going to get some wood,” Techno said, awkwardly shifting his weight. “Since you guys interrupted me the least you can do is come give me some help. Free labor.”

“Sure!” Ghostbur said, even though Techno knew Ghostbur wouldn’t actually help. His ability to touch things seemed to vary from moment to moment. Him with an axe was a bad idea.

“I wouldn’t mind,” Ranboo shrugs. Techno wonders why the hell he’s there. Surely the teen had better things to do than hang out with the terrorist he helped almost execute a couple of days ago. But Techno doesn’t look into it. Free labor was free labor, and it drew them away from the house.

He can probably get a few more of his items out of Ranboo along the way. The kid seems very susceptible to peer pressure, something Techno could understand. And maybe, just maybe, he enjoyed the kid’s presence a little bit. Not working in silence would do wonders to help dull the chat.

It’s probably one of the most awkward supply runs Techno had ever been on. Ghostbur helped fill up a bit of the silence due to his inability to read the tension in the air, but both Ranboo and him weren’t the best at small talk. Techno dully finds him missing Tommy, who although sucked at small talk was very good at filling up the silence.

Even if Tommy was here, it wouldn’t be the same. Tommy wouldn’t be able to properly follow the conversation. It makes his stomach roll, so he doesn’t think about it more.



It isn't the worst time though. He finds himself kind of enjoying the company. Ranboo had a very similar sense of humor to him, very dry and sarcastic. It made Techno chuckle more than once. And the kid seemed genuine. He never acted afraid of him, never treated him as anything other than an equal. It was refreshing to say the least.

They return back to his house an hour or so later, Ghostbur drifting off at some point and leaving the two of them alone. It was a bit uncomfortable, but it wasn't the worst silence he had ever been in. Ranboo sometimes made small talk during the walk back, but mostly they just walked with each other, both of them lugging stacks of wood behind them.

Techno also gained a few more items out of the trip. Almost all his stuff was back now. That was cool. His stuff back, and a possible new ally. All in all, a mostly successful trip.

"Well, you should get going now," Techno said awkwardly when they got back, the two of them standing in front of the house. Neither of them knew how to go from here, so Techno figured just shoeing the kid away would be best. Ranboo seemed a bit sad at the dismissal, but shrugged anyways.

"Alright well-" He trailed off, his eyes drifting beside Techno's head before his eyebrows furrowed. "Is that Tommy?"

Techno whips around, seeing a flash of blonde hair duking out of sight. Goddamn kid and his inability to stay out of fucking trouble. Why was he awake? Did a decent amount of sleep mean nothing to him? And now he had to find a way to salvage this. That gremlin was always causing problems for him.

"No?" He said, not meaning for it to come out like a question. Ranboo stared at him with a baffled expression, his tail flicking from side to side.

"I'm pretty sure I just saw him," He says, eyes now glued to the window in hopes of catching another look.

"I have no idea what you're taking about," Techno said again, hand moving towards his weapon. Ranboo wasn't paying enough attention to notice.

"He was right there!" Ranboo insisted. "I know what Tommy looks like."

"Look man," Techno snaps and Ranboo looks back over to him, eye darting to the hand resting on the axe. "I can just kill you; you know."

"Woah!" Ranboo stumbled back a bit, tail wrapping around his ankle like it was pulling him back. "I didn't mean anything bad! It's just that I haven't seen him in a while you know? And you remember what Ghostbur said yesterday."

Techno let out a low hum of warning. Ranboo seemed to get a bit more distressed at that, ears pressing flat against his head.

"And Tubbo went to visit him yesterday after uh, everything, and he came back super distressed and refused to tell any of us what happened," Ranboo had raised his hands in

surrender when Techno took another step forward. “Did they have a fight or something?”

This wasn’t good, this was very bad. Tubbo knew that Tommy had broken his exile, and Ranboo now knew where he was. If they put that information together they could come here and force Tommy to leave, which would be bad. Or they could tell Dream, and that would be worse. Techno needed to find a way to diffuse this and fast.

He moves forwards faster than Ranboo can reach, grabbing him by the suit collar and slamming him against the side of the house, pressing his axe blade into his chest. Annoyingly, he was taller than him, so Techno had to look up to make eye contact. He could feel the hybrid tense up a bit at that. Techno quickly moved his eyes to the side, not wanting to be that much of a dick.

“You didn’t see anything, understood?” He growled. “Tommy is not here. Tommy was never here. Okay?”

“Yeah sure,” Ranboo said quickly. “Whatever you say man.”

Techno didn’t see any hint of insincerity in his eyes, so he shrugged and let the hybrid go, taking a step back. Ranboo pulled his collar back in place and ran a hand through his hair, practically scrambling to get some distance between them.

“You should go now,” Techno said more firmly, and Ranboo was quick to nod.

“Yeah, yeah, good idea,” He mumbled, turning and walking away. Techno relaxed a bit. He was fairly sure he wouldn’t say a thing. Afterall, he probably wasn’t supposed to be here in the first place. Admitting to that would be bad for both of them.

“Hey Techno?” Ranboo asked, suddenly stopping to turn and face him, his hand reaching into his pocket. “Tell Tommy I said hi, and to not be a stranger.”

Before Techno could formulate a response Ranboo was pulling out a pearl, disappearing in a puff of purple smoke. He feels a flash of irritation mixing in with a tiny bit of amusement. Little shit. He shakes his head, turning back towards the house. Now he had to go deal with the other little shit.

In Tommy’s defense, he hadn’t actually told him to stay out of sight, but you would think that if you were technically a wanted criminal for breaking exile and horribly injured, you’d stay out of sight. It doesn’t matter either way, Techno was good at adapting to the situation. If Ranboo told people, he’d figure it out. No use worrying about something that hasn’t happened yet.

He’ll just plan out every possible escape route they could use, maybe brew some extra potions, make sure they’re extra stacked on supplies.

He opens the door to the house, opening his mouth to start scolding Tommy before his eyes lock on his brother once again peacefully asleep on the couch. The words die in his throat. There are three apple cores on the ground in front of him, all of them shining with gold.

Techno frowned at that, walking over and picking them up. Not exactly the kind of food Techno was hoping his brother would eat. Three golden apples were better than nothing he guessed. Tommy was all skin and bones at this point, something that Techno had placed on the long list of things to be concerned about lately. Tommy's malnutrition would make his recovery a bit of a struggle and Techno should be glad he was keeping anything down at this point. But golden apples? Really?

He only had a few of those, and they were useful in battles. He would need those if the stupid butcher's army even decided to take another swing at him. He couldn't just have Tommy going around munching on them whenever he felt remotely peckish.

He remembers the way Tommy ate the potatoes earlier, how every bite seemed like a struggle. How he couldn't keep more than a couple bites down. He remembers being able to see every single one of Tommy's ribs.

Techno sighed. He had plenty of gold, he might as well just make some more.

## Chapter End Notes

There it is!! I genuinely love writing Ranboo, I just think he's a really neat character and I am in love with the idea of his character having a tail and stuff like that. Anyways, we finally have another Tommy perspective next!! And hopefully I should be updating faster again. I hope you're all having wonderful days/nights!!! <3

# And you know when the sun dies

## Chapter Summary

Tommy wakes up, has some soup, and has a mental break down. All in all a pretty normal couple of hours

## Chapter Notes

Tommy's back!! I'm sure he's doing great :) This chapter gave me hell but I still like it so we're all good lol. I also updated the tags a bit because I do touch on Tommy having some issues with food in this chapter as well as some of the future ones! So be careful about that! I don't think it's anything too bad, mostly just Tommy talking about his issues with food in exile and problems he has now keeping down some food. I hope you all enjoy!!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Tommy still dreamed of sounds. Voices tumbling around his head, mocking him with their existence. He wished he had anything other than nightmares. Just once he'd like a dream of hearing Tubbo's laugh, remembering Wilbur's singing, anything but the yelling that plagued him.

*You're never going to be president Tommy- I want to see white flags!- you couldn't do one thing for me- Tommyinnit, you're scared- so you want to be a hero Tommy?- down with the revolution boys- Tommy I think we are the bad guys- Dream, please see to it that Tommy is escorted out of my country- let's be the bad guys- then die like one!- it was never meant to be- you're selfish- no one can come here, you are alone- you're like an annoying bug I can't get rid of- Tommy, you are officially exiled from L'Manburg-*

It's all a swirl of noises, fading in and out of existence, the boom of TNT following behind it. Then he would wake up, and there would be nothing but that mocking silence and he wishes to go back to that endless nightmare, to trap himself in the sound and never leave.

He woke up feeling slightly more clear-headed than the past few times. The cotton inside his brain had eased a little, making everything just a bit easier to understand. He liked being able to think again.

So much had happened so fast. Had it only been like four days since he was in his exile? When Dream decided to blow everything up? When he lost his hearing and everything else? It moved so fast. He was asleep for most of it though to be fair to him.

So here he was. Tommy was good at rolling with the punches and adapting as things went on, so he just needed to figure this out. Put his giant brain to good use and think his way through it.

He was at Techno's still. Techno knew he was here but didn't kill him, in fact Techno helped him with his injuries and provided him with supplies. That was good, Tommy liked free things. The only problem was that he has no idea why in the world Techno would do that for him, unless he wanted something from him. Tommy didn't really want to be indebted to his brother at this point in time. He had bigger problems going on.

But if he didn't go along with whatever Techno wanted, he was on his own with no supplies and nowhere to go. That was bad too. He could try to steal but Techno would probably kill him if he tried. He thinks that's probably the best bet either way. On one hand he gets supplies and gets away, and on the other he dies. But if he leaves without even trying there would be no point. And well, there were worse ways to die.

Okay. So new plan, steal from Techno and make your escape as soon as possible and just avoid Dream for a very long time. Or maybe go back to exile. Maybe Dream would accept his apology and take him back, help him figure out how to navigate the world without his hearing.

But Dream was the person to take his hearing. Dream was the one to push for his exile. Dream wasn't his friend.

Dream had stayed by his side throughout exile. He had come to the party. He had been there for him.

Tommy stops thinking. He should have known better. He tries to remember what helped when everything got overwhelming earlier. He just needed to think in simple steps. One foot at a time. And first things first he needed some water. His throat felt like he had swallowed around a gallon of sand. And he would know, he used to wake up under the water with sand floating down his throat. Not pleasant.

He sits up from the couch, shifting uncomfortably and scratching his neck. He turns to try and see if his brother was in, finding the piglin hybrid asleep in a chair by the fire, head leaned back and mouth hanging open. He looked stupid. Tommy debated sticking something into his mouth as a prank. He decided he wanted to keep his hand instead.

What was he doing? Right, water. He remembered where Techno's kitchen was, so he slipped to his feet and wandered in that direction, hesitantly glancing back every few steps to make sure Techno was still asleep. He hadn't moved, and Tommy thinks he might've been snoring. He wishes he could hear it. He wishes he could hear anything.

He blinks away the sudden sting in his eyes, gritting his teeth and taking a deep breath in. Focus. Water. He starts rooting through the cupboards, pulling out a small wooden cup and placing it on the counter. It was weird, placing it down and not hearing the light clunk. A tiny bit fascinated, he lifted it up again to put it down with a bit more heft. Still no noise at all. He was sure there was some kind of sound, could feel the slight bounce in his hand, but it was absent to his ears.

He slammed it a few more times before remembering that he was trying not to wake Techno up. He turned, trying to see if his brother woke up only to see Techno a couple feet away from him, looming in the background.

He jumps back, flinching at the sudden appearance and gritting his teeth in order to not make a noise. Techno immediately put up his hands in surrender, amusement sparkling in his eyes. Tommy wanted to punt him.

Techno lifts up a book in his hand, waving it through the air before tossing it on the table, pointing at Tommy then gesturing at the book, before pointing at himself and then the kitchen. It took Tommy a second to realize what he was trying to say.

“I read whatever you have to say and you’ll be my bitch and make me food?” Tommy said cheerfully, already taking a seat and grabbing at the book. “Sounds like a plan.” He doesn’t turn to see Techno’s response, but the man had moved out of his sight, so he just hopes he’s actually making food and not grabbing a knife to kill him with.

He’s glad to finally be off his feet again. The exhaustion is still weighing down his limbs and his shoulder is aching just at the small movements he’s already made. Every step felt like he was walking through honey. He reaches for the book to take his mind off of it.

Almost the entire page was covered in Techno’s scribbles. Tommy rolled his eyes, debating on reading it at all before giving in.

*You’ve been out all day, it’s almost dinner now. You woke up once but all you did was throw an apple core at me and go back to sleep,*

Tommy did not remember that at all. Good on his sleeping self.

*I found a bunch of books on hearing loss and sign language in my library. Bought them in bulk ages ago but never had a use for them until now. Communication through this book is probably going to be the easiest for us, since I read that lip reading isn’t an exact science. If you want to we can learn sign language to help. I think we both know morse code as well, so that’s always an option as well. I don’t really care either way. Whatever you want to do.*

Tommy hadn’t been thinking about communication. The few times he was awake the thought was too overwhelming for him to even consider or think about for more than a couple of seconds. Thinking about anything relating to his newfound disability was too much in general. But sign language was a thing, he had seen some people using it around the server before. And morse code was something he learned a long time ago. The book would work too.

It was just frustrating, not being able to just have a simple fucking conversation anymore because he couldn’t hear what Techno was saying. He wasn’t able to even hear his own voice to tell if he was even saying anything right.

He shakes his head, pushing the thoughts out of his mind and going back to his book.

*Ground rules for the house. Don't steal my shit anymore. Don't break anything. Don't blow anything up. Try to stay out of sight when people come around. Don't be annoying.*

Those were stupid rules. Tommy was sure he was going to be breaking every single one. He's pretty sure he already broke the stay out of sight one, even though he didn't mean for Ranboo to see him. He was just trying to find Techno and happened to catch the hybrids gaze. Totally not his fault. Tommy kind of wishes Ranboo came in to say hi.

Techno puts a bowl of soup down in front of him, grabbing the book and sliding it away from him. Tommy stared down at the broth, his stomach twisting at the idea of food. He knew he needed to eat, knew that with his injuries his best bet would be to eat a shit ton of food in order to get more energy back.

And it's not like he doesn't want to eat. He does! He loves food. Eating is great. But for some reason, ever since the exile started and food was a bit of a scarcity with Dream sometimes blowing up every scrap he had, his appetite had left. Whenever he was allowed to eat the food always tasted like ash on his tongue, tasteless and gross, the texture weird and uncomfortable. Every time he took a bite of anything he was expecting that same wrongness.

And he simply just wasn't hungry. His stomach felt empty, but not in a bad way or anything. It wasn't grumbling or anything and he honestly felt fine.

He looked up at Techno, who was writing something down in the book. He probably expected Tommy to eat. Tommy wasn't sure what Techno's whole plan here was, but Tommy's best bet was playing along until he could nick some stuff and get out of there. And that meant eating. Gross. He wishes he had thought to grab some of the golden apples he had stockpiled. Those always tasted the same and gave him a burst of energy that he could ride on.

He picks up the spoon and carefully blows on the steaming liquid, pulling it up to his lips and swallowing it down. It seemed to lump up in his throat. It was utterly tasteless and bland and Tommy hated it. He missed the taste of the stew he used to make with Mushroom Henry's help. It was the only thing he could really stomach in exile. Thinking of the cow brought back memories of Dream's sword going through his heart, so he forced that back and took another bite.

He managed to choke down around half of the broth before his stomach started twisting painfully and he pushed it away, trying his best not to throw up. He looked up at Techno, who was looking at him strangely. It was weird seeing his brother without that mask. It was weird being able to see the micro expressions Techno made and being able to actually see his eyes.

"What are you looking at asshole?" Tommy hissed, curling into himself slightly. Techno rolled his eyes and pushed him over the book. Tommy took it and opened it to the next page.

*You're stuck with soup for a little bit. Then we'll try you on simple things like potatoes and some meat. We'll work on it. Any thoughts on learning sign? I don't really care so everything is up to you. I also need to know how this happened.*

The last sentence caused Tommy to tense up, the smell of gunpowder starting to burn his nose. He closed his eyes, taking a deep breath before opening them and staring at the paper once again. He wasn't there. Dream was gone. He wasn't any safer with Techno, but for now he was here and not there. The sting of gunpowder faded, lingering just in the back of his throat. He could almost feel the vibration and the heat from the explosion dancing along his skin.

"I fucked up, I paid the price," Tommy said through gritted teeth, refusing to look at his brother. He focused his gaze out the trapdoor windows. Suddenly Techno's hand is in front of his face, snapping. Tommy flinched back slightly, but reluctantly drew his gaze back to his brother with a glare.

"Not a fucking dog," He muttered. He doesn't think it made enough sense for Techno since his brother doesn't react in any way. Techno points at his lips.

"That's (bats? cats? shats?) not enough, who did (kid?) this?" Techno said, mouth moving slower. Tommy scowls, turning his head back down towards the table. Techno doesn't move to regain his attention, so Tommy figures it's okay.

He doesn't want to tell him. Doesn't want to admit his weakness, that he was such a fuck up that he forced his only fucking friend to blow everything up. How can he look at Techno, who has never made a mistake in his entire fucking life, and admit that ruined everything so bad that he lost his hearing?

He remembers being a child and looking up to Techno, doing everything in his power to impress him. That impulse had long faded as the trips Techno and Phil took together got longer and Tommy had to learn how to raise himself, but it wasn't completely gone. Maybe a small part of Tommy, buried deep under the anger and pain that flared whenever he looked at Techno, wanted his older brother to be proud of him again.

But that was ridiculous. It would never happen. And even if it did Tommy didn't want that. He hated Techno. Techno had ruined everything. He didn't owe his brother anything. Techno's fingers were tapping on the table where he was looking. Tommy reluctantly looked up again. Techno had grabbed the book and had written something new.

*Tell me Tommy. That's not a request.*

Well fuck. Could Tommy go one day without pissing someone off? He didn't want to tell Techno, but now Techno was mad at him. So he had to, Dream had made sure to teach Tommy that just telling the truth and listening to orders was the best way to survive. And Tommy had been surviving for much too long to know how to do anything else.

"I hid some things from Dream," He hisses through clenched teeth. "He found out, got pissed, and blew it up. I was stupid enough to jump too close to too many of the blasts. Guess I fucked up my ears doing that."

He can't look at Techno, doesn't want to see the disappointment and disgust on his face. Doesn't want to see his own self-hatred reflected back at him. But with every agonizingly



silent minute that passed, the anticipation became too much. Tommy couldn't just sit here and wait for the smack or the anger to show up. He risked a look up at his brother.

Techno was staring at the table, both his hands clenched into fists and a hauntingly blank look on his face. He was pissed. Tommy had fucked up once again. His world swirls dangerously as the scent of gunpowder became overwhelming. He was suddenly dying in the heat, and he could feel the phantom pain of wood and metal cutting into his skin.

What had he done wrong? Techno wanted him to tell him. He did what he wanted, and Techno was still pissed at him. It wasn't fair. It wasn't fucking fair. None of this was fucking fair. How was he supposed to avoid their anger when they kept switching up the rules like this? Tommy felt like he was playing a game rigged for him to lose.

It was his fault anyways. Everything that happened was his fault and he was drowning in the guilt of it all. He felt like he was dunked underwater, waking up with mouthfuls of sand and water tickling his lips and lungs.

Maybe Techno didn't get it. Maybe he thought that Tommy wasn't taking enough responsibility for what happened. Techno had always preached personal responsibility. He had always said that Tommy would fuck up his life some way and it would be entirely his fault. And he did. Techno was right. He should be happy about that.

"I fucked up," Tommy said again. And he doesn't know if he's talking to Techno or himself at this point. Techno's head snapped up, their eyes meeting. Tommy doesn't think he could stop talking if he wanted to. "It was my fault. I deserved it."

Techno stood up suddenly, the movement startling Tommy and making him flinch back in his chair, his heart rate spiking dangerously. All he could focus on is the smell of gunpowder, the smear of bright red fire dancing across his eyes, a white mask staring him down.

Techno turns and leaves the room, and Tommy can feel what seems like a slamming door vibrate throughout the entire house. He stares down at the now cold soup lying in front of him, and he wonders how in the world he managed to fuck everything up this bad once again. How he managed to continuously piss people off. He annoyed Tubbo into exiling him, pissed Dream off enough to lose his hearing, and now Techno was mad. Tommy wonders what he's going to lose when Techno comes back to give him his punishment.

All he can think of is the smile of Dream's mask, the clench of his fist as he stood over a bruised and battered Tommy with a stinging cheek. He can see the smears of bright red, oranges, and whites as the world around him exploded. See the blood dripping out of Mushroom Henry's dead body. Can feel the suffocating heat as he leaped close to the explosion.

He can feel his mind twisting and shuttering under the forces of his memories, pounding and bouncing around his skull and screaming without any sound.

He stumbles to his feet, needing to escape and get away as if he could run any further from the consequences of his actions. He can feel tears racing down his cheeks, can remember waking up drowning almost daily and wondering what would happen if he just didn't put in

the effort of swimming up to the surface. He feels the heat of the lava choking him as he stared into its mesmerizing depths.

He wants it all to stop. He wants to fracture his mind open until he stops thinking at all and then pull his ribs apart in order to stop his heart from beating and allowing him to remember the shit storm that his life had turned into. He doesn't get any of that, so instead he finds the coldest corner in the house and tucks himself into it, wondering how long it would be until the memories suffocate him completely.

He doesn't think he'll have to wait that long.

## Chapter End Notes

My new favorite thing is to look through the bookmarks to my stories because I've never been in a fandom that actually like, leaves comments and notes and stuff on their bookmarks?? And it's like genuinely entertaining to look through and see what you guys put lol. Anyways, I hope you enjoyed the chapter! The next is already half-written so it should be out soon :) Hope you're all having a lovely day/night wherever you guys are!!  
<3

# Nobody gets exactly what they want

## Chapter Summary

Tommy and Techno have some good ole bonding time

## Chapter Notes

A special shoutout to everyone who saw my comment on how much I love going through bookmarks and left me a little message lol. Those made my day. Also! I was trying to puzzle out the timeline for this fic because the timeline in the Dream SMP is literally on crack, so I decided to make it be four months since Wilbur's death, and have Tommy be in exile for around three months. Just for the fun of it. Anyways, enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Techno is going to murder that man. He's going to find that green blob looking motherfucker and rip him apart piece by piece as slow as he could.

He blew everything up and permanently disabled Tommy, all because the kid hid a few items from him? Tommy was a nuisance. He never followed the rules. He antagonized people purposefully in order to get a rise out of them. Of course he was going to break the fucking rules. Stealing and hiding shit was what he did best. He was practically a raccoon in that sense. And when he did that you just take your stuff back and yell at him for a bit, not shove him headfirst into an explosion and then make him believe it was his own fucking fault.

Tommy and him didn't have the best relationship as of late, the kid had a habit of annoying the shit out of him and there was still everything that happened between them in the past. But how could he not get upset over this? How could he sit by and be calm while Tommy whispered that it was all his fault? When Tommy looked Techno in the eyes and Techno was taken away by the sincerity he could see?

How could anyone look at Tommy and think that he deserved something like this? No one deserved this. And that's not to mention whatever else happened in the exile. Things that Techno didn't want to even think of.

Chat was going insane, a choir of screaming voices calling for blood and revenge. Techno wanted to give it to them, he really wanted to give it to them. Techno thinks that if Dream was in front of him right now nothing could stop him from painting the snow with his guts. He had never felt this protective over Tommy. It was a bit annoying.

Speaking of Tommy, he probably dealt with that situation badly. Tommy had clearly been unwilling to tell him anything, and was clearly panicking when Techno left. Maybe leaving an injured and fragile boy alone after something like that was a bad idea.

Shit. He was going to have to actually talk to Tommy about this, wasn't he? Normally he would be fine stepping back and just letting Tommy get through it himself with some gentle guidance, but this kind of shit didn't seem like something you could walk off. Techno was perhaps the worst person to be around Tommy right now, but it seems like he's all the kid has left. And that means he's the one that's going to have to deal with the kids panic and mood swings.

He walked back into the house, expecting to see Tommy still sitting in his chair, either miserable or angry like always. What he got instead was an empty house and Tommy nowhere to be seen.

"Tommy?" He calls out, spinning around. "Where are you?"

He genuinely waits for an answer of any sort before chat helpfully reminds him that Tommy won't be able to fucking hear him. The anger sparks again and he has to take a deep breath in order to calm down. Getting angry was no use until Dream was in front of him and Techno could punt him into the sun.

For now he just has to find Tommy again. He would have noticed if Tommy had left the house, so that means he squirreled away somewhere inside. He can't hear anything, so he'll just have to look around and hope for the best.

There's nothing upstairs, and he hadn't seen Tommy anywhere in the kitchen or living room, so that ruled out almost everywhere except the basement. Which made sense, since Techno's sure that Tommy's shoulder wouldn't actually allow him to climb up the ladder without a lot of pain. Going down was a lot easier than up.

Sure enough when he walks down the stairs to the basement, he can see Tommy shoved into the corner. His knees are pulled up to his chest, his face buried in them and his arms curled around himself. He's shaking, rocking back and forth slightly and if Techno focuses hard enough he can hear soft humming filling the air. He was clearly out of it. Fuck. This was worse than Techno was expecting.

He thought he might have to cheer up a pouting Tommy or deal with his blinding anger. He wasn't really prepared to deal with a Tommy going through what appeared to be a panic attack. Did Techno trigger this? He'd have to figure out what kept setting Tommy off and find a way to stop doing it.

Techno stood uncomfortably in the entrance to the room, shifting from foot to foot. He wasn't sure how to go at this. He couldn't read Tommy's mind, and he wasn't quite sure what was causing this panic. Techno wasn't stupid, he had seen and noticed many alarming things over the short time Tommy had been awake.

His tendency to flinch away at fast movements or anything that surprised him, apologies that fell from his lips that never used to happen, the way he tensed whenever Techno asked him

something like he was judging the dangers of refusing. It was a puzzle that Techno almost had every piece to, but had yet to see the full picture. All he knew was that something had happened to Tommy and he was positive Dream was behind it.

Slowly, he started walking forwards, making sure to stomp just a little in case Tommy would be able to feel it. He wasn't sure how effective that would be, but judging by the way Tommy tensed up he's pretty sure it worked.

Tommy's head popped up from his arms, and suddenly Techno feels an overwhelming urge to turn tail and run.

Tommy was crying. Tommy hadn't cried in years. Techno hadn't seen him even teary eyes since they were kids. Techno's pretty sure he didn't even cry after watching Wilbur die, but he didn't really stick around long to find out. It's possible that Techno just hadn't been around to see it, but that doesn't change the fact that Techno really didn't know how to deal with a crying Tommy.

"I'm sorry," Tommy whispered out, his voice sounding one syllable away from shattering. "Please don't be mad."

Techno feels like something grabbing onto his heart and squeezing very hard. He feels himself start to panic a little, not sure how to best deal with this. He wants to go upstairs and sit down until he stops feeling so lightheaded. But he doesn't think leaving Tommy this upset down here would be good.

He raises his hands up slowly in surrender, doing his best to appear unthreatening and calm. He's aware that he's failing pretty hard. Tommy flinches at every small movement, his eyes carefully tracking every inch that Techno shifts. His eyes are slightly unfocused, staring at a spot over Techno's shoulder.

"It's, uh, it's okay Tommy," Techno says awkwardly. Tommy doesn't react at all, and it seems like he's not focused enough to even be aware that Techno's talking in the first place. So talking him down is out of the question.

Fuck. Techno's pretty bad at talking, but he's even worse at everything else. How was he supposed to go about this? Whenever he panicked Phil always talked him through it. But Techno didn't have that option. What else even was there to try and do? Tommy clearly wasn't calming down on his own.

First things first he had to make himself look less threatening to Tommy somehow. He slowly crouches down to the balls of his feet, making himself the same height as Tommy, who is still staring at him with unfocused eyes.

He decides to go with the first impulse in his mind and he slowly opens up his arms in a silent offer.

Techno hates hugs, he really does. Touching sometimes makes his skin crawl and it often made him uncomfortably warm. But if talking was out of the question, maybe touch would help.

Tommy's eyes finally focus on him and he stares at him just long enough for Techno to start debating impaling himself on his own sword before suddenly the kid is moving, practically launching himself forwards and collapsing into Techno's arms.

Techno stumbles back a bit, landing on his ass with an arm full of shaking teenager. Tommy was clutching onto his cape, his head buried in his shoulder, shaking like a leaf and heaving with silent sobs. Techno's completely tense, unsure of what to do as his brother clings onto him. He seems so small in Techno's arms.

"I can't hear," Tommy whispered, his voice shaking and breaking with sobs. "I can't hear, he's going to find me and hurt me again, everything's moving so fast, I don't know what to do Techno. I'm scared. I want Wilbur back, I want Tubbo, I want Dream. I don't know what to do Techno. I don't know."

Techno wonders if Tommy's aware of what he's saying. Of the absolutely devastated tone in his voice. Techno slowly wraps his arm around Tommy's frail shaking shoulders as the teen continues to ramble almost complete nonsense, a spot on his shoulder starting to wet with Tommy's tears. Tommy's hands were tugging lightly on his cape in what Techno thinks is an attempt at grounding.

Techno isn't sure how to make him feel better, he isn't sure what's really going on or how to stop his brother's tears of panic. So instead he just focuses on holding him, carefully rocking him back and forth in the way that he's seen Tommy do sometimes when he's stressed. He gently rubs Tommy's back in what he hopes is a soothing pattern.

He's so small in his arms. Techno's sure that if he squeezes hard enough he could probably snap Tommy's spine in half. He forgets sometimes that Tommy really is a kid, especially with how Tommy's always willing to step up and lead someone into battle.

Sure Tommy's always been a bit immature, reckless and unexperienced no matter how many wars he bullshitted his way through. But here, having Tommy sobbing in his arms, reminds Techno of when they were younger and the kid had nightmares about mobs breaking down his door. Those times weren't actually that long ago.

Techno's kind of panicking, because Tommy isn't calming down in the least bit and this position wasn't the most comfortable. The hard stone was digging into his tailbone and his legs were going numb from Tommy's weight resting on them. And Tommy is still hyperventilating, chest heaving against Techno's own, soft keening cries falling from his lips.

With little to no more options left, Techno goes to possibly the last thing he ever wanted to do. He starts humming. He remembers the faint tunes of Tommy's favorite discs, the ones that he seemed to obsess over and take immense amounts of comfort in. He slowly starts humming the tune, focusing less on the actual noise and more on creating a soft rumble in his chest.

Tommy tenses up a bit, his sobs quieting down as the song continued. After a couple of minutes, Tommy's sobs had turned into quiet sniffles, and he seemed to be focusing on the gentle vibrations coming from Techno's chest, the familiar tune lulling him into a sense of peace.

Eventually Techno thinks the kid had calmed down enough, so he carefully untangles their limbs, helping Tommy to his shaking feet. The kid refuses to look up at him, and Techno figures his mind is racing, so he doesn't push it. He just carefully leads Tommy upstairs to the kitchen again, sitting him in a chair before turning and going back to the stove. His brother instantly slumps into it, resting his head on the cool wood.

He puts on a pot and goes to the fridge, pulling out a fresh bottle of milk and placing it in. It's silent apart from a few occasional snuffles from Tommy and Techno's quiet shuffling. The milk begins to boil and Techno grabs some old leftover chocolate he made and plopped it in, slowly stirring it until it melts. He adds in some cinnamon and vanilla before pouring the hot chocolate into two separate mugs, placing one in front of his brother, who was sitting up again and gently rubbing at his eyes.

Tommy immediately pulls it towards him, eyes falling shut as he curled around the cup as if expecting someone to take it away. Techno sits opposite from him, in similar positions that they were before this all happened. After a few minutes of silence, he taps the table, drawing Tommy's eyes to him. The dull blue was red-rimmed and guarded.

"I think we need to have a talk," He said gently and slowly. He hates the way that Tommy's face instantly falls, like that was exactly what he was hoping Techno wouldn't say.

And Techno would be the first to admit, he didn't want to be here either. He wasn't really cut out for the whole serious talks about our feelings and stuff like that. He was much more of a push it down and hope for the best kind of guy. He especially didn't want to talk to Tommy about it. Not anything against Tommy, it's just that he was a little unpredictable at the moment. Techno liked the predictable, when he knew what was going on and could expect what was happening next. The unknown was stressful, and Tommy was a pretty big unknown.

He took a moment to really look at his brother. Tommy looked exhausted from what appeared to be a full-blown panic attack, fidgeting and clearly miserable. He was looking everywhere but at Techno, his entire body held taut.

Techno really wants to talk to Tommy, to figure out exactly what happened in exile for them to get to this point, to figure out how to best help him since Techno was kind of floundering at this point. But getting Tommy to talk about serious things was always like pulling teeth and was probably going to be especially hard when he was glancing to the door every couple of seconds as if debating if he could get there before Techno could. He wouldn't be able to.

Tommy wanted to be there about as much as Techno did. Techno was bad at emotions, at vulnerability, and talking shit out. So maybe they needed to talk, maybe they needed to address whatever the hell happened, maybe it made him a bit of a coward, but instead of holding his ground and demanding Tommy talk to him, Techno turned and picked up a book from the pile beside him.

He grabs a pen and the notepad they had been writing in earlier, pushing the book of sign language towards the teen, who stared at it with confused eyes.

*We need a better source of communication* Techno quickly wrote down. *Want to learn some sign?*

He pushed the book to his brother, hoping he took it as the peace offering Techno meant it to be. Tommy read it, looking up to Techno and searching his face for something. He must have found it, because next thing he knew Tommy was brightening, straightening up a bit and seeming to lose a bit of the tenseness in his shoulders.

"I would love to big man," Tommy said, his voice loud once again. Techno let out a sigh, relieved that Tommy seemed mostly back to normal and he managed to avoid ruining anything any worse than he already had. Maybe avoidance was a good plan.

Techno takes back the book and quickly scribbled down some important signs. They needed a baseline first. They could move to work on becoming fluent as time went on, but Techno figured starting with a handful of maybe ten to fifteen important signs they could use would be best to start with. Tommy already seemed fairly overwhelmed, so he decided to start small. He pushed the book over to Tommy, who started reading them out loud.

"Danger, look here, go there, focus, hide, help," Tommy looked up at him, raising an eyebrow. "That sounds like paranoia personified."

"You can never be too prepared," Techno was quick to defend himself, sitting quietly as Tommy processed the words and tried to figure out what he was saying. After a couple of seconds Tommy snorts, rolling his eyes.

"How about bitch? Fuck you? Shut up?" Tommy grinned, and it only looked a little frail. Techno wasn't sure if Tommy was feeling better or getting good at putting on an act. His voice was louder now, rising to a level much louder than needed. "Those are necessary words to have in my vocab."

"How about quiet down?" Techno grumbles a bit, before realizing that must make it harder for Tommy to understand and repeating himself. "How about quiet down? You're talking too loud. Need to work on regulating that."

He meant it in a half-joking manner, because Tommy had proven to be a bit inconsistent with his volume levels lately and he wanted to address it while also diffusing some of the tension still left in the air, but Tommy's entire face falls at that, his head tilting down as he started fidgeting again, shoulders tensing once more.

"Sorry," He whispers, the sound almost lost to Techno's hearing. Techno sighed a bit guiltily, mentally making a note to try and not say anything too condescending. Apparently Tommy didn't like that. He taps on the table gently, waiting for a couple of seconds before Tommy looks up at him once again.

"It wasn't a criticism," Techno said slowly. "It's a common thing. We'll work on it."

Tommy takes a couple more seconds this time to understand him, but eventually he nods, looking slightly wary but going with it.



Techno pulls over the list and adds 'quieter' and 'louder' to the list. He then passes it and the pen to Tommy, gesturing for him to write down some important words as well.

They sit in silence as Tommy scribbles, eyes narrowed in concentration. Occasionally he'd dart his gaze up to Techno, as if to check that he was still there and hadn't moved. Techno makes sure he stays as still as possible, since every little movement he makes causes Tommy to freeze up and stare at him until he stops moving once again. His mind whirls with the implications of that, but Techno tries not to think about it.

This was supposed to be a happy brotherly bonding time. There was no time for him to lose himself to negative thoughts or the call of blood from his chat. After about five minutes Tommy pushes the book back over to Techno, pulling the sign language manual towards him and starting flipping through the pages. Techno looks down to see the words Tommy wrote in.

*Fuck you. Bitch. Shut up. Food. Water. Please. Shit. Sorry. Go away. Sleep.*

The rest of the list was basically the same, genuinely helpful phrases tangled in with various swear words. Techno thinks he can work with this.

They spend the next hour or so searching through the book and practicing the basic signs over and over again, mostly single words that they can use to indicate things. It's slow going, mostly since Tommy often gets bored or insists on learning some of his favorite words over actual useful ones. It's a tiny bit hard, learning the different motions and remembering what words they coordinate to, but Tommy picks it up alarmingly fast.

It's a silent affair, neither of them talking much beyond quick corrections or suggestions for words. That is if you ignore the minute long ramble of swears Tommy directs at him after Techno told him to shut up in sign. Tommy's eyes are a bit brighter after it, so Techno lets him get away with it.

After a while they seem to both have a basic understanding of not only their list of words but other basic signs such as 'hello' or 'how are you'. Tommy seems more content now that he can communicate better, and Techno feels a bit more at ease knowing he can quickly and quietly tell Tommy that there's danger and show him where to hide.

Eventually, both of their attention spans fail them while attempting to learn the alphabet for finger spelling and they decide to call it a day. Tommy looked exhausted, and the sun is finally starting to set outside. Techno still needs to go do his nightly check on the crops and animals, so he quickly scribbles that down for Tommy, who just shrugs and waves him off. He seems to be at his limit for actual words.

Techno thinks he should make them dinner, since the late lunch he fed Tommy wasn't that good, but he doesn't feel like cooking and judging on how much Tommy ate earlier he probably wasn't in the mood. So he just subtly leaves a couple golden apples on the edge of the table before he pulls on his armor and heads out the door. He'll ask if he's properly hungry after.

The cold air chills him immediately, and he shivers slightly before heading towards his turtle farm. Checking everything is rhythmic, a routine that he had perfected over the past couple of months. Had it really only been four months since he moved out here? It seems like so much longer. Time flies he guesses.

He gets his work done by the time the moon had finally risen, and he only needs to cut down a few stray mobs on his way back to the house, shattering them apart with ease. He opens the door and instantly relaxes into the heat, brushing off the snow on his clothes.

He pauses, frowning as he notices the soft notes of music floating through the air. It seems to be coming from downstairs, familiar notes of Chip dancing around. Curiously, Techno heads downstairs, climbing down the ladder with ease.

He finds Tommy in the corner of the room once again, but instead of panicking, Tommy had his jukebox pulled out and placed behind him, a disc slowly turning around inside of it, creating music to fill the air. Tommy was leaning against it, back pressed firmly to the box and his head hung slightly, eyes squeezed shut. He was swaying slightly to the tune he could most likely feel through the vibrations on his back.

Techno watches for a couple of seconds, realizing that this was the most relaxed he had managed to see Tommy ever since he had shown up. He feels like he's intruding on something important, something he doesn't have the right to see. He leans over and flicks the lamp on and off, alerting the boy to his presence.

Tommy's eyes fly open, starting slightly as he looked up, body tensing up once again, a guarded look on his face. He scoots back slightly, pressing his entire body firmly against the box as if trying to shield it from Techno's view. Techno smartly doesn't comment on that, simply choosing to shakily sign the word for food.

Tommy's face lights up slightly, his own hand quickly forming the sign for 'yes'. Techno isn't sure if the boy is actually hungry or if he was just excited to be able to sign. Techno figures it doesn't matter either way.

Techno is the first to go upstairs, allowing Tommy a minute to gather his things and put them away in private.

He knows they should have talked, that Techno needs to figure out some of Tommy's trigger fast in order to avoid whatever the hell had happened earlier. He'll have to learn what happened to Tommy eventually, but for now?

For now, this felt like enough.

## Chapter End Notes

Not the biggest fan of this chapter but I just wanted to get it out because the next chapters a fun one, we're introducing another character! I won't tell you who it is but I'm

sure you all can take a guess at who it is lol.

# **We've turned our hands to guns traded our thumbs for ammunition**

## Chapter Summary

Tommy dedicates himself to learning a new language but in the end falls back on the only one he knows

## Chapter Notes

This chapter was actually kind of fun to write :) Hope you guys like it cause I blew off like twenty pages of notes that needed studying to write this lol

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

After Techno and him worked through some basic signs, Tommy obsessed over the idea.

He never thought that he would ever say anything like this, but Tommy kind of hated speaking now.

He still could, sixteen years of talking wasn't erased by a few days of not being able to hear, but it wasn't that much fun. He knew he was speaking, could feel his mouth make the words and his vocal cords vibrate with the syllables, but to be unable to hear what he actually sounded like was pretty fucking weird to say the least. He didn't know how loud he was being, if his words slurred or twisted inside his mouth. He could only guess what he sounded like and what tones he was using. It was trippy and he wasn't a fan.

It was easier than signing, especially with Techno around, but if it were up to Tommy, he would probably never open his mouth again. Which kind of sucked. He loved speaking, loved being able to hear the words in his mouth and fill up the chattering silence, loved being able to talk his way out of things or make people smile.

All in all, Tommy missed his voice more than anything. Truth was that he just couldn't find it again. He pretended for Techno's sake, but every word that fell out of his mouth felt like poison, sticky honey trying to glue his mouth shut.

Sign language gave him an opportunity to talk without having to actually talk. To be able to communicate and actually talk to people without having to go through the despair that came with hearing the overwhelming nothingness in place with his voice.

And it feels a bit liberating, finally feeling a bit more in control. Taking this really shitty thing that happened to him and wrangling it to work in his favor. Tommy didn't really have control over a lot of things lately, especially losing his hearing, but he did have control over this. He wasn't a fucking child and he wouldn't let this shitty thing get the upper hand on him. He controlled this, not the other way around.

So even though reading normally made him bored out of his mind, Tommy picked up a book and started to read. For hours he sat with the multiple books sitting beside him, going through and practicing each and every sign there was, memorizing the smooth movements and figuring out how to best string them together into a sentence.

It was a bit hard, but Tommy found himself getting into a bit of a rhythm the longer he focused on it, spending hours pouring over the material. Techno would sometimes awkwardly come into his vision, checking in on him and looking very confused when Tommy would practice signing at him. Normally Tommy just ended those attempts by colorfully swearing at him, something that Techno seemed to now have a great understanding of.

Techno does ask him to teach him a few signs as well, once even coming and sitting on the floor by Tommy's feet, flicking through a couple of pages and practicing some signs with him. It was oddly sweet. It made Tommy's stomach turn.

Mostly though, Techno leaves him alone, working out on the farms or gathering supplies for some tools and armor. Tommy doesn't question him. He doesn't mind that much that Techno isn't putting in as much effort into learning sign, it just means that Tommy's able to shit talk him to his face.

A small part of him hopes that Techno will learn for him either way. An even smaller part wonders if Tubbo would be willing to learn for him.

Those thoughts make something deep inside his chest burn and his vision suspiciously blurry, so he pushes them away.

He wonders if Dream knows sign language. He probably does. Tommy has vague memories from years ago of seeing Dream and Callahan communicating through sign language. When Dream takes him back he'll ask.

If he ever goes back. Dream was really mad at him. Tommy hates making Dream mad. When other people get mad it's funny, but when Dream gets mad it just hurts. And Tommy had left now, so Dream might not even want him back. Tommy guesses he's just really good at fucking up friendships. If that's what they had.

He's starting to get a headache.

Anyways. Sign language. Lots of fun. Very nice. He had been working on it ever since he woke up bright and early after a cold breeze shocked him awake. Apparently Techno got up very early to tend to the farm and didn't really care about waking Tommy up. Tommy had been unable to fall back asleep, still reeling from a nightmare of Dream's smiling face. So he simply pulled up a book and got to reading.

Techno had shoved an egg at him for breakfast, but Tommy wasn't able to stomach more than a couple of bites before he pushed it away, already too focused on his study to be hungry. Same thing at lunch, except Tommy fully ignored the slice of buttered toast in favor of munching on a couple of golden apples. It was food so it counted, even if Techno stared at him for a solid ten minutes when coming back to pick up the untouched pieces of toast.

It was around dinnertime now, time flying by quickly when Tommy wasn't paying attention. Techno had practically picked him up in order to drag him to the table. Tommy grumbled the entire way, his head still stuck in a book. So he now sat at the table obsessively repeating the sign for horse.

Techno slides him a bowl of what smells like mushroom soup. His stomach turns over. He doesn't really want to eat right now, and just the smell of the mushroom soup sent his mind spiraling back to exile, hours spent beside Mushroom Henry drinking some soup because it was the only thing he could keep down.

So yeah, no food tonight. Not in the mood. He just wanted to sit and read his book. He would eat more tomorrow if he felt more up to it. No harm, no foul. Wouldn't be the first time he went without food for a couple of days. He was used to it by now, after both Pogtopia and exile.

He jumps as Techno slams the book down beside him. He looks up at his brother with an unimpressed look, but Techno simply gestures at the notepad. Techno's been wearing that stupid boar skull again, so Tommy can't read his expression. He guesses it doesn't matter much anyways. He rolled his eyes, reaching over and picking it up to see what his brother wanted. Underlined in bold letters was a single word.

*EAT*

Fucking bitch. Tommy doesn't want to eat his shitty mushroom soup. So he flips Techno the bird and goes back to his book. He needs to learn the sign for cat.

Next thing he knows, the book is getting ripped out of his hands, a startled noise of anger falling from Tommy's lips. Or he thinks it does. He reaches for the book but Techno pulls it back further, using his other hand to push the notebook forwards and tapping the word aggressively.

"I was reading that asshole," Tommy said, each word tasting like ash in his throat and making him want to eat even less.

Techno taps the page again, pointing at the food and making the sign for eat.

"I'm not fucking hungry," Tommy growls, doing his best to sign along with the words. It's very clunky and he knows Techno doesn't understand it in the least bit, but it makes him feel a bit better. "Give me my book back."

He reaches for it once again, but Techno pulled the book away and above his head, Tommy unable to reach it even with his freakishly long limbs. Techno uses his other hand to pull off his mask, his lips moving almost instantly.

“You need (peed? seed?) to eat,” Techno says, and Tommy feels a white-hot flare of anger rise inside of him. He isn’t a fucking child and Techno isn’t his fucking dad.

He’s not incapable and if he doesn’t want to eat he doesn’t have to fucking eat. He’s tired of feeling like he has no say in what he does, tired of having people boss him around and tell him what to do. He’s not helpless. He isn’t. He can’t be. He’s felt so fucking helpless ever since losing his hearing and he hates it more than anything. He hates this idea of not having any control. Over being rendered useless and incapable by a few measly pieces of TNT.

And now Techno’s acting like he’s five years old and needs to be persuaded into eating. Like he was a toddler needing to be coaxed through a temper tantrum. He’s not a fucking child. He’s not fucking incapable.

“Fuck off,” He snarls, slamming his hand down for emphasis. He hopes it’s loud. Judging by the sting on his palm it is. Techno looks entirely unimpressed, reaching forwards and grabbing the book, writing down a message with short angry pen strokes.

*Eat the fucking soup because I am not above shoving it down your throat.*

Tommy is fucking tired of this shit. He’s tired of people telling him what to do. He didn’t have a choice on where to live, if he got to keep his stuff, what he did during the day, if he got to live or die. And now he can’t even choose if he wants to fucking eat. He flies to his feet, his hands clenching into fists as the anger and helplessness bubbles up inside of his chest.

“I am not eating the fucking soup,” He screams, taking pride in the way it makes his throat ache. Impulsively he reaches forwards and grabbing the bowl of soup, throwing it onto the floor. Soup flies everywhere, soaking his feet and making him grit his teeth at the sharp burn. “Just because I’m deaf doesn’t mean I’m a fucking invalid you have to take care of. So just fuck off and give me back my fucking book.”

Techno stands up too, and Tommy flinches back slightly, but stands his ground. Something deep inside of him purrs at the action. This was good. This was familiar. Tommy knew anger, he knew Techno’s anger. Dream would have hit him by now, and Tommy almost aches for it. Because then at least one thing wouldn’t have changed. At least one thing stays consistent over his entire life.

Techno points a finger at him, the angry movement causing Tommy’s heart to stutter with fear before he realized it wasn’t actually a hit coming towards him. He feels almost disappointed.

Techno’s mouth is moving, but the words jumble together and he isn’t sure what the hell he’s saying. Techno’s talking too fast. Anger surfaces again, this time directed at himself. He can’t even fucking fight with Techno because he has no fucking clue what he’s saying. He’s so fucking pathetic he can’t even manage this simple thing. He can’t even properly continue the argument he started.

“I can’t fucking hear you, you asshole,” He snarls, and Techno reaches down, scribbling out a message before tossing the book on the table again, his movements short and angry. Tommy

wonders how much longer until he snaps. His sock is wet from the soup and it clings uncomfortably to his feet.

Tommy grabs the book and blinks back tears over having to use a fucking sheet of paper in order to have a proper argument. It's pathetic. He's pathetic.

*You became mine to look after when I dragged you half dead out of the snow and into my house. So sorry for trying to keep you alive.*

"Well I never fucking asked you to do that," Tommy whispered, tears pricking his eyes once again. He knew Techno would hold that against him, he knew there would be some kind of debt owed. "You should have just fucking left me there if I'm so much of a problem for you."

He throws the book back on the ground and wishes for something else to toss. Something to break and shatter and see just how much he can destroy before Techno's fist is coming his way. See just how far it takes for his brother to snap and finally just fucking hit him because Tommy has no idea what's going on and he needs some semblance of normality to make him feel less like he was drowning with no idea where the surface was.

Techno just stares at him, his face shifting between anger and indifference. Tommy hates it. Tommy wants to reach forwards and slam his fist into Techno's face until something breaks. He wants to find the nearest sharp edge of a sword and shove himself into it. He wants to fall asleep and never wake up. He wants to hear again. He wants Techno to just move or say something or do anything other than sit there and stare at him. This uncertainty was a thousand times worse than any punishment he ever had to suffer through.

Techno turns and walks out of the room, leaving Tommy standing there alone and upset, shaking with anger and frustration. He doesn't know what's going on, how to react to this. He knows anger. He knows fear. He doesn't deal well with the unknown. And this was very unknown. Everything about this was unknown.

Out of the corner of his eye he sees Techno walking back in. He tenses slightly, but refuses to turn and fully look at him. He feels something soft slap his foot and looks down, seeing a towel lying half on his foot and half in the soup. Out of the corner of the eye he sees Techno make the sign for attention.

He doesn't really want to, but he reluctantly looks over at his brother, hoping the anger was reflected in his stare.

"When you're done (fun?) being (seeing?) a child, clean (lean?) up the mess," He then turns and walks out of the room, leaving Tommy there alone with wet socks and tears threatening to build in his eyes.

The anger bubbles up again, and he scrubs at his eyes angrily, not even understanding why the fuck he's about to cry for. He wasn't a child. He fought in wars. He had won them too, practically single handily in some cases. He had been exiled multiple times and knew what it was like to not only stare death in the face but to taunt him and come out the other side.



Techno could baby him all he wanted to, but Tommy wasn't a child. He was sick and tired of being treated like one. He already felt ridiculous enough being without his hearing, and he didn't need this making it worse.

Mechanically, he reaches down and grabs the towel, cleaning up the soup either way. Even if it makes him want to scream and lash out and break his knuckles against the wooden floor. Techno would think it to be some kind of fucking breakthrough.

Tommy just knew that if he left a mess the punishment would be worse. Sure, maybe he was a pain in the ass, but that doesn't mean he likes getting hurt. He just knows it's coming and knows he's stupid to think it wouldn't be. Might as well do his best not to make it any worse than it already was. He was stupid, not a masochist. And he knew that mushroom soup stank if you left it out.

He heads downstairs, the small basement area having become a bit of a comfort area for him. Or maybe just a place to escape. He knows Techno's outside. Or at least he's guessing he is. Techno seems to head there whenever upset and wanting to blow off some steam. He doesn't want to look and make sure. He curls up in the corner, Techno's stupid cow walking over to lie beside him. His fur is upsettingly soft to pet. He feels himself drifting a bit and lets himself, his thoughts floating idly past.

He stares down at his hand, the one not petting the cow beside him. It doesn't really look like his own. Sometimes he blinks and sees it covered in blood and scrapes from fighting. Sometimes it covered in black soot that clogs his lungs. Sometimes he can almost feel the weight of a sword held in between his fingers, the string of a bow balancing on his fingertips.

Then he'll blink and it's all gone, and all that's left is a hand clean from blood and soot, small scars littering the pale skin. It doesn't feel like his own. He wonders if his hands will ever know anything nice, like the soft feeling of a flower, or the warmth of someone else fingers entwined with his own. He wonders when his hands will know anything other than violence. He wonders when his hands will feel like his own and not something being pulled along by tight strings.

He isn't sure how long he sits there, hand sifting through soft fur and staring at a blank grey wall, a chill leaking into his back. Suddenly, he can feel vibrating footsteps shake the house. As if someone was stomping around. He tenses up. Techno must be back inside, and judging from the stomps, he sounds pissed.

But then maybe Tommy is going insane, and really there's no way of properly telling since he was going off literal vibrations he can feel through the walls, but it almost feels like another set of steps entering the house. Who the hell was here? Should he hide? Was it Dream? Had he pissed Techno off that much?

He feels panic start to race through his veins and he scrambled to his feet, swaying dangerously as his sense of balance attempted to right itself. His eyes darted around for an escape, but there was none that didn't involve going upstairs again. His eyes dart to where he knows the hole he was stashed away in earlier was, but before he could even think to move and break the stone once again, Techno was climbing down the ladder and Tommy froze where he stood.

Techno refuses to meet his eyes. Tommy's a bit grateful for that. Techno raises a hand and shakily signs the sign for 'follow'.

"Why," Tommy replies, hoping his voice sounded less dead than I felt.

"Someone's here (beer?) to see (key?) you," Techno speaks slowly, and Tommy pretends his heart doesn't spike alarmingly at that. This was it. Techno found Dream and he was going to have to go back to the ruins of his exile. His little vacation was over.

"Who?" Tommy whispered, and Techno stared at him for a long moment, eyes searching Tommy for something. He frowned, before quickly making the signs for 'safe'. Very helpful. Thank you so much Techno.

Tommy realizes he doesn't have much of a say in this, so he might as well just get it over with. He straightens up his spine, taking a deep breath in and gesturing at Techno to get a move on. His brother opens his mouth, like he was thinking of something to say, before just closing it and turning away, quickly climbing up the ladder once again.

Tommy took a moment to compose himself, but he knew the longer he waited the more upset everyone would get. The childish part of him wanted to cross his arms and wait here until one of them drug him upstairs, but he wasn't a fucking child. He could be mature and responsible.

He lifts a hand to the ladder and starts to climb. It burns his shoulder, but in a good kind of way. The wound had been healing fairly fast thanks to the potions Techno was shoving at him sometimes, so it had dulled from blinding pain to just a dull ache every time he moved it.

Within a couple of seconds he was standing back upstairs, eyes ducked down as he moved to stand beside Techno, almost tucking himself into his side. He took a deep breath, preparing himself as he looked up.

Only it wasn't Dream standing there, his smiling mask boring holes into Tommy. Instead, Tommy could see a large pair of grey wings and a green bucket hat. It was Phil standing there in the kitchen, rooting through some of the cabinets.

He turned around, a blinding smile on his face when his eyes meet Tommy's. His mouth is open and he's talking rapidly, but Tommy can't catch anything and is left standing there awkwardly, unsure of what was going on. Phil's still talking, his forehead crumpling a bit in confusion. Tommy thinks his name might've been said. Phil's eyes then look to Techno, and Tommy follows them.

It looks like Techno's talking as well, but at the angle he's at Tommy can't read his lips. He's getting pretty fucking tired of this conversation already. He feels like an outsider, standing there with his family but being unable to tell what the hell they're talking about. The anger flares up again, but he's too tired to properly let it get a grip on him.

It's just fucking annoying, seeing them just casually talking as if he wasn't there and he couldn't even do anything to change that because it's not like he can properly communicate with them anyways. He's never felt more useless and overlooked in his life. Sure he's very

relieved that Phil's here, and the joy of seeing his dad instead of Dream lifted something inside of him. But to be honest this wasn't much better.

He turns back to Phil, whose eyes are darting from Tommy back to Techno as if he looked away from either of them for more than a couple of seconds they would disappear. Phil looked sad now, hands clenching and unclenching into fists by his side. Tommy looks back at his face and sees that he's talking again, but it all just looks like a jumble of words that Tommy can't pick up.

Then Phil's walking forwards, and Tommy is tensing up, panic alarms blaring in his mind cause he has absolutely no idea what in the world is going on. Without any warning, Phil is suddenly pulling him into a tight hug.

It feels almost nice. The touch sends sparks of electricity racing along his skin and it feels almost suffocating, but it's nice to be held. He hasn't been hugged in a very long time.

Dream had sometimes laid his hand on his shoulder or ruffled his hair when he was good, but it's been a long time since he's had a proper hug. He doesn't really remember who it was. Maybe Tubbo, right after Wilbur's death. That feels right.

Either way, he leans into the touch, but it feels awkward, stilted. He doesn't remember the last time Phil hugged him. The embrace feels almost too warm and Tommy doesn't know where to put his hands so he just stands there, head ducked and leaning down awkwardly.

He knows Phil is trying to comfort him, but he had long ago forgotten how to accept his father's love.

A part of him, a very small part of him he hadn't heard in years, wanted to melt into the embrace and sob. He wanted to hold onto father and tell him everything, because his dad would make it better. His dad would soothe the ache deep inside of him. His dad would protect him.

Wilbur had thought those same things. Look where that got him.

The embrace suddenly feels just a bit too restrictive and he pulls away, looking down when he saw the heartbroken look on Phil's face. Tommy wants to curl into a ball and die. He wants to march into the nether and see which mob gets him first. He wants Dream back, because although he hurt him Tommy always knew how to accept what he gave out.

He wonders if his life is always going to be this eternal swing between anger and despair for as long as he's alive.

The thought makes him sick.

Dadza's finally here! The next chapter is already written so it should be up soon!! Happy Valentines everyone and I hope you're all having a wonderful day!!! <33

# **I don't think badly of you, well sometimes I do**

## Chapter Summary

Phil stretches his wings

## Chapter Notes

I know I said this chapter would be out earlier but school decided to actually start being a bit hard lol. Who would've thunk it? Also, thank you guys so much for all the love you gave last chapter, reading all your comments really do make my day :) Anyways! Hope you enjoy this chapter! I tried out a new perspective so that was fun. This is a bit of a shorter one and that's because the next two chapters are both longer ones I'm super excited for so yeah :)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Phil still wakes up with Wilbur's blood clinging to his hands and the roar of an explosion in his ears. He knows war and he knows battle. He lived through them all with minimum problems. Sure he had sometimes woken up with the scrape of metal in his ears, but it never impacted him that badly. He moved on; the world continued to turn.

But now? Now he could barely sleep through the night. He wakes up hearing Wilbur's voice begging him to kill him and his hands shake so badly that he sometimes can't even manage to hold his tools. He shoved it down as hard as he could, pretending that everything was okay and avoiding the strange looks Techno sends him when he visits. He was fine. He would be fine.

He wasn't even sure why it bugged him that much. If he was being honest, he didn't even really have the best relationship with his son. Phil had always tried to be there for Wilbur, but with the constant moving around and adventuring, they needed someone to stay back to watch over Tommy. And Wilbur was always willing to do it. So Phil tried to be there for him, but the way things worked didn't allow them to see each other that often.

It got worse as time moved on, as Wilbur grew angrier and learned how to use his words as weapons. Whenever Phil did visit Wilbur would almost refuse to talk to him, being passive aggressive in every conversation they had, no matter how many times Phil tried to reach out. He was a difficult child to deal with, and despite remembering the hours they used to spend talking together when Wilbur was younger, the time away made them both forget how to properly communicate with each other.

When Tommy and him left to explore new lands, Wilbur didn't write to him much at all. He was lucky to get a few monthly updates that included a few clipped sentences and nothing more. Phil had only been aware of his grandson through Tommy's letters, the same with any of the wars Wilbur started.

Maybe Phil was too harsh on his son, expecting too much of him from such a young age. But Wilbur had always risen to those occasions, never complaining and taking everything in stride. Phil had trusted Wilbur, to look after Tommy, to look after the house, and Wilbur did it every time. There was no room for failure in those tasks, and Phil placed a lot of trust in Wilbur to do them.

And Phil didn't think their relationship was *that* bad. Sure they had their fights and their distance, but they loved each other and that's what mattered. Sure, Phil was never the most present dad in his kid's life, but- well, maybe that was why it hurt so much.

Because Phil thought he had years to repair their relationship. He thought that at some point his wanderlust would fade and he would be able to properly settle down, share stories with his kids and grandchildren. To watch Wilbur grow older and keep creating like he was always destined to do. He thought he had so many years with his son, only for it to be cut short by his own blade.

So now Phil lost his son, and was left with the hollow ghost of him. Ghostbur was nice, but it wasn't Wil. That much was clear. And every time Phil looked at him his chest would ache and his hands would shake with the regrets he might never be able to wash away. He had failed his son for the last, fatal time.

And as for Tommy, well Tommy had always been a spitfire and Phil knew self-destruction when he saw it. He had seen many soldiers lose those they loved and run headfirst into battle with no regard to their safety. Tommy was dancing along the edge of a knife and it was no wonder that he got cut.

Phil could only hope that this whole exile thing could teach his son some responsibility. Phil knows he probably should have been the one to teach it to him. He doesn't like thinking about it. Phil just hopes that Tommy learns it quick, or else Phil's fairly sure his youngest will be the next son he's burying. Phil hates how easily he could see Tommy getting killed by his own mistakes.

Either way, he thinks Tubbo handled this whole thing the way he should have, and Tommy would be back soon enough. Nothing seemed permanent on this server. Nothing except death. And nightmares. And Wilbur's voice haunting his dreams.

Anyways, he had meant to go visit Tommy more, he wasn't an idiot. He regretted what had happened with Wilbur more than anything, and he didn't want to do the same with his two other sons. He wanted to spend more time with Tommy, because he knew that Wilbur's death had hit him hard and Phil knew that he hadn't spent nearly enough time with his youngest.

But the month before Tommy's exile was filled mostly with Phil helping Techno establish his house in the arctic, because Phil was still reeling from Wilbur's death and he didn't want his son to freeze out in the snow with no help. He figured he would talk to Tommy when Techno

was settled down, but then the whole trial thing happened and before Phil knew it Tommy was leaving for some place else.

Then he had wanted to give Tommy a couple of weeks to adjust to his exile and maybe learn his lesson, some alone time to reflect on his decisions where he'd hopefully learn that his destructive behavior hurt a lot more people than just himself. Phil saw it similar to the time outs he used to have to force Tommy into when he was still a toddler.

And after that he got a little too focused on visiting Techno and helping around the house, and then the whole execution and house arrest thing happened and everything happened so fast that Phil barely had time to think about his youngest.

The anvil dropping on Techno's head had started haunting his dreams as much as Wilbur did.

Phil had spent hours staring at his communicator once Techno had escaped, fearfully waiting for a message saying he was okay and everything was fine. When he got a message saying that Tommy was with him, Phil immediately got worried.

The brothers weren't on the best terms at the moment, and Phil was a bit concerned about them killing each other without him there to act as a mediator. Both of them were susceptible to anger so easily, Tommy falling onto it as easily as breathing and Techno commonly getting egged into it by the overwhelming voices inside his own head.

But Techno hadn't seemed upset in his message, even if it was a bit vague. Getting past the whole ankle monitor thing would take him a couple of days, so Phil decided that they would be alright for a little bit while he figured the whole thing out.

Thankfully, it didn't take him long. Phil never liked staying in one place for long amounts of time, and this was no exception. He learned that the cabinet wouldn't show up until a couple of hours after the sun rose and always left him free in the afternoons, especially if they were having a busy day.

Whenever he was alone he took to fiddling with the monitor, learning how to best disable it and get it off with as little struggle as possible. Two days later he thinks he figured out how to do it.

So he waited until Tubbo left from his most recent visit before snapping it off with a clean hit of his sword, and before anyone could even see him he was spreading his wings and taking to the sky. The escape was clean, and he was sure no one would really miss him that much.

Phil had long since lost his respect for the nation and everyone inside. Everywhere he looked was a reminder of Wilbur and the madness that forced Phil to take his life. L'Manburg was a lost cause. It had corrupted Wilbur to insanity, its power weighed heavily on Tubbo's shoulders and forced him to horrible, unforgivable things. It had tried to kill Techno multiple times and made his own grandson lock him up and try to kill Techno. It was a curse, a disease that Phil was happy to leave behind.

Maybe moving out to Techno's house was for the best. Some peace and quiet to soothe the soul and some quality time with his sons.

The flight to Techno's house was a familiar one, something he had done many times over the past couple of months to regain the strength in his wings. Ever since they got scorched in the explosion it was a bit of a struggle, but Phil always made due. The path was engraved into his memory and in less than an hour he was entering the snowy biome, glad he had thought to wear his heavy coat.

Phil loved flying, the freedom it gave him and the rush of the wind soaring past him. Flying through the snow was a little less fun, because it got his feathers wet and the winds were almost always against him, but it provided him with a bit of a challenge he liked.

Gods above he forgot how much he loved flying. He had only really been in house arrest for a couple of days, but it felt like years. Phil wondered when he'll be able to sit still and stay in one place for longer than a couple of months. He remembered Wilbur asking him the same question many years ago.

He lands outside of Techno's place in a good mood, a nice flight and an easy escape. He finds Techno outside, unmoving as he stared at his turtle farm.

"Hello mate!" Phil called out, starting Techno slightly. He must have been lost in his thoughts. Phil knew his son had a tendency for that. Techno raised a hand to wave at him.

"Hello Phil," There was a sense of relief in his words. Tommy had probably been wearing him thin. The boy had a talent for that.

"I'm finally freed," Phil laughs, reaching forwards and pulling Techno into a quick hug. His son awkwardly returned it like always. "How are things? Let's go inside, I'm freezing my ass off mate."

Phil turned and walked towards the house, not waiting for Techno's answer. He turned to see Techno following him a couple steps back.

"How have things been?" Phil repeated once they were inside and it became clear Techno wasn't going to say anything. "House arrest was boring as hell."

"It's been eventful," Techno said hesitantly, Phil letting out a laugh at the hybrids tone of voice. Phil beelined to the kitchen to rummage around in the cupboards, putting a pot of water on the stove. He always made himself a cup of tea when he showed up. Normally Techno had one as well, with minimum grumbling.

"I would figure, you said Tommy was here? Never a quiet moment with him," Phil grabbed out a couple of mugs, wondering if Tommy would like a cup. He didn't know if his son liked tea or not. "Where is he by the way? Thought he'd come running once he heard me come in. Got him out gathering supplies or something?"

"I- well, about that," Techno sounds uncomfortable and Phil turns around, worry spiking.

"Did he do something wrong?" Phil asked, not liking the look on Techno's face. He looked exhausted. Why hadn't Phil noticed the fact that Techno wasn't wearing a mask? That was



weird in itself. Normally he only did that when just Phil was around, so had Tommy left already? The kid was always a bit of a runner. Took after his old man in that aspect.

“No, it’s just-“ Techno sighed, running a hand down his face. “It’s hard to explain. I’ll go get him, you’ll understand pretty quick.”

That’s really odd, but Phil was more than used to dealing with Techno’s odd behavior. Techno disappears down the ladder and Phil can hear faint talking, unable to make out any words.

He shrugs, turning around and searching for the tea. He’ll make Tommy some just in case. He pulls out three mugs and grabs the new blend, putting it on the counter.

He hums softly to himself, not paying attention to the uncomfortable weight pressing down on him. This was a good day. He wouldn’t let a little anxiety ruin it. Techno would have told him if it was something bad, Tommy probably just pissed him off or something. Or he was in one of his moods again. That was it. Nothing bad at all. Nothing to worry about. Wilbur’s voice whispers in the back of his mind but Phil has lots of practice in tuning him out.

He hears footsteps while he’s pulling out the strainers, and Techno clears his throat after a couple of seconds. Phil turned around, a grin on his face as he looks at his sons.

Tommy looks- well to put it lightly Tommy looks like shit. He’s as thin as a stick, his skin a horrible pale color except for a smear of purple under his eyes. His eyes themselves a dull grey, the complete opposite from their usual brilliant blue. He looks half dead. What the hell had happened to his son?

He makes sure his smile doesn’t drop in the least bit, although he flicks his gaze to Techno for a moment, who is also staring at Tommy almost apprehensively.

“Hey Tommy, it’s nice to see you again mate,” He says, keeping his tone gentle. For some reason he thinks Tommy will spook like a cornered animal if he talks too loud. Tommy only blinks, staring at him uncomprehensive. He makes no move to answer or even react to his presence. Phil feels the worry inside of him spike. “Tommy? Mate? Everything good?”

He looks over to Techno, who looks solemn. When Phil looks harder, he could see what almost looks like grief buried deep in his gaze.

“He uh- he can’t hear you,” Techno says softly, and Phil thinks his entire world crashes around him. He can faintly hear Wilbur’s manic laughing in the back of his head.

“What?” Phil says, his face dropping as he turns back to Tommy, who was staring at Techno. “What do you mean? Of course he can hear me, can’t you Tommy?”

He sounds like he’s begging. He thinks he might be. Tommy doesn’t even turn his head to look at him and Phil feels something inside his stomach twist.

Tommy can’t hear him. Tommy can’t fucking hear. Phil can’t believe it. One son died from his own hand, and the other now disabled for some reason. How the hell had this happened? Who did this? Phil should have visited, he should have checked in. He should have done

something over the months Tommy was in exile because how the hell did something like this happen? He was the adult here, the father. He was feeling like a bit of a shitty one right now.

How had he failed this badly? Who did this to his son? How could Phil have missed this? Where did his bright sunshine child gone? And who the hell was this stranger standing in front of him, with a blank face and hollow eyes?

Oh gods above, if he was freaking out just over the implications of Tommy somehow losing his hearing, he doesn't want to imagine what Tommy's going through. He remembers how distressed he was when his wings wouldn't work for a while after the explosion, and that was something he knew would go away eventually, something that could be fixed. Phil could only hope that maybe Tommy's could be fixed as well.

Phil can't help himself from moving forwards, gathering Tommy into his arms before anyone could say anything else. Fuck, Tommy must be miserable. Phil wants to do anything in his power to make that stop.

Tommy is all bones in his arms, and he doesn't relax into it like he did when he was a kid, instead standing there awkwardly, hunched down in order to allow Phil to grab him while he tucks his head into Phil's chest. It feels wrong. Unfamiliar. When was the last time Phil hugged him? He's disturbed to realize that he genuinely has no idea.

Tommy's the one to pull away first, almost like Phil's touch was too much for him. He refuses to look over at him, and when Phil glanced at Techno the hybrid was just sadly staring at his brother.

Phil stares at him as well, taking in his horrid state and the uncomfortable sadness on his face. There's something buried deep in his eyes that nearly tosses Phil back to that horrid day, when Wilbur was staring at him with crazed eyes. He promises himself that he'd do better for them. He has to.

He fears if he doesn't he'll be losing another son quite soon.

## Chapter End Notes

Theres Phil's interlude!!! Phil's a complicated character, and he isn't trying to be a bad father, but I just feel like he doesn't understand why his actions might hurt his sons. But I do believe he cares! And he will prove himself!! I promise! This fic is about giving me the family dynamics that I require and that includes Phil being a solid father figure lol

# God I'm such a fuck up if you only knew that I am such a fuck up

## Chapter Summary

Tommy goes outside

## Chapter Notes

Sorry this took so long!! This chapter really fought with me at every step of the way lol. Anyways, time for another installment of horrible communication makes Tommy very sad.

(Also sorry if some of my replies to your guys comments yesterday are a bit incoherent it's like 3am and I've been up since like 7am lol. I tried to make them make sense but I'm not sure how well I did with that oops. Anyways I'm heading to bed and I hope you all had a wonderful sleep last night and tonight as well!! <3)

Also! Just as a warning Tommy deals with a lot of internalized ableism in this chapter and thinks a lot of bad things about himself and his disability. I know that can be triggering for some people so I just wanted to give you a heads up and I've put up a tag for it!!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Tommy hates how easily Phil fits in with Techno. The two of them had their own little rhythm, a pattern that they went through with ease. Tommy feels a bit out of place while Phil makes tea and Techno sits in the background. He can tell the two of them are having a casual conversation he can't follow and Tommy hates how much that makes him want to scream. Tommy was exhausted after Phil showed up, still reeling from his fight with Techno. He figured he would get away with it now that Phil was here, but he didn't want to test his luck by sticking around and antagonizing them and ruining their easy companionship.

He slipped away as soon as he could, going downstairs to what he had claimed as his new bedroom until he got out of here. He might have to actually bother Techno for some proper blankets and a bed at some point, but for now he was content with the cape Techno gave him and a few blankets he stole from the couch earlier.

He didn't sleep the entire night, eye glued to the ladder even when he was pretty sure Techno and Phil had gone to bed. He had no way of telling without being able to hear, and he didn't

want to go check. So instead he lay there awake all night, counting his breaths and wondering if he truly got away with his outburst.

He wasn't sure when the sun rose, but his eyes were drooping and his mind was foggy when he saw someone climbing down the ladder. He snapped to attention quickly, holding himself tense as Phil turned to look at him, a soft smile on his lips. His father looked like he did not want to be there, Tommy shared the feeling.

Phil was holding the book Techno and him had been using for communication, and Tommy glared at it, not really feeling like talking to anyone, writing or not. Phil sat down across from him, waving cheerfully and pushing the book across. Tommy sighed and picked it up.

*Good morning! Hope you had a good sleep. Techno made some scrambled eggs to eat. I can bring it down here if that works better for you. Is there anything you want to do today?"*

Oh, so now Phil wanted to spend some quality father-son bonding time. Tommy tried not to let the anger boil up in his chest again. Anger was too familiar sometimes.

"I'll come up," He said softly, hating how a tiny part of him beamed at the way Phil's face lit up. He wanted to be a problem and sit downstairs, but all his sign books were upstairs and he really wanted to keep learning, even if it did leave a bit of a bad taste in his mouth.

He probably wouldn't be able to learn it either way. It was probably pointless. But he had nothing better to do and it gave him a reason to ignore everyone else. So Phil stood up, reaching down a hand to help Tommy up.

He paused for a moment, staring at the hand before ignoring it and getting up, ducking his head and moving past his father. Just because he was somewhat cooperating didn't mean he had to play along with everything. If Phil wanted to be a good father for once in his life he could fucking work for it.

Okay, maybe Tommy was still a bit bitter he hadn't visited. He came over once the entire duration of his exile, and only really stayed for an hour before slipping away. It had been the first person other than Dream to visit in ages and Tommy had been excited about it.

It hurt to see that Phil was distracted the whole time, helping out a bit in preparation for that stupid party. Tommy thinks he might've just stopped by to rest his wings on his way to Techno's house. Wouldn't put it past him. Tommy hated the bitter feeling crawling in his chest.

Tommy made his way upstairs, nodding at Techno who was sitting at the table, reading one of his books and wearing his stupid-looking glasses. Techno nodded in return, eyes not leaving the paper for more than a second. He pointed at Tommy's plate, where a small helping of plain eggs sat beside a mug full of water.

Tommy didn't feel like eating, but he knew that he should after the mess that yesterday was. He didn't like food, but he wasn't really ready to pass out due to starvation again. And when he glanced at Techno's plate he saw there was a lot more there. So he figured he could do with smaller portions. How could one person even eat that much?

Phil had finally come up, his smile still there but a little more strained. Tommy avoided his eyes, shoving the food into his mouth. It tasted like nothing and the texture was a bit rubbery. Really, could Techno not even put even just a pinch of salt on there to make it more appealing? He made a face, quickly glancing at Techno to see if he caught it.

Techno was still reading his paper, but there was a small tilt to his lips. Tommy couldn't tell if it was because of something Phil said or the face he made. He figured he didn't care either way. If Techno and Phil wanted to make jokes and leave him out of it that was their right. Tommy was just going to be thinking fucking hilarious things all day and they would have no way of knowing. That'll show them.

He's done the eggs in less than ten minutes, standing up and turning from the table without another word. He picks up the stack of books that he had lying around and turns to head downstairs. Out of the corner of his eye he can see Techno waving and signaling for attention, but Tommy was in the mood to be a little shit and ignored him and continued his decent.

If they really needed him, they could come downstairs and get him themselves.

He spent the day downstairs beside Techno's cow, reading through his books and obsessively learning different signs. Learning them was the easy part, but stringing them together in a new way was harder. He read that it was pretty much an entirely different way of structuring his sentences, almost like learning new rules for grammar. The book also talked about how facial expression could alter things, talking about how the position of your eyebrows could change the meaning of a sentence. It didn't actually tell him how though.

He spends hours practicing his sentences, coming up with the most absurd things to say and signing them to the cow, who mooed happily every time he did. Or at least Tommy thinks he does, his mouth opens and he can feel a soft rumble from where he's leaning against him so he figured that was close enough.

Tommy isn't sure how long it takes, but his back is starting to ache and his mind is covered with a pleasant fog, his eyes heavy from the lack of sleep. It was cool in the basement, but the cow lying against him provided him with enough heat to feel comfortable.

He stared at the page, trying in vain to read what the sign for door was but the picture was blurring in front of his eyes, a yawn tearing from his lips.

He could take a quick nap right? That wouldn't be the end of the world? He would just close his eyes for a moment, just to rest them and stop the strain he was getting from reading for hours.

He blinked, his head dipping to his chest as his breathing evened out. He fell asleep with three books open around him, his neck at a weird angle and hunched over, only being held up by the patient animal beside him.

For the first time in a while he didn't dream of anything at all. No muted and distorted sounds that taunted him, no flashing images of TNT and blood. Just sweet darkness and a complete lack of thought.

He was pulled out of his sweet escape by hands on his shoulder. Two hands grabbing him and holding him tightly, shaking him slightly. Two unknown hands with the potential to scratch and burn and hurt.

He flung his eyes open, scrambling away from the hands as quickly as he could, his entire body flinching back harshly. His back slammed against the wall, his head whipping back forcefully and slamming into the stone wall, sending pain spiking through the base of his skull.

He winces, panic bubbling up his chest as he blinked through the last bits of fog covering his vision, staring at a wide-eyed Phil who had his hands raised in a placating gesture, clearly embarrassed.

Phil's lips move but Tommy missed what he was saying. He takes a stab in the dark and hopes that Phil was asking if he was okay or something similar to that.

"I'm fine," He chokes out. "Just resting my eyes. What do you want?"

Phil didn't look convinced, opening and closing his mouth a couple of times, a horrible sad look in his eyes. Pity. Tommy hated pity; He didn't need nor want it. He wasn't some breakable object that has shattered on the floor. There was no need for any sympathy or pity because he wasn't broken. He was a big strong man who didn't need any fucking pity.

Phil decided against saying anything, to which Tommy was glad of, raising his hands and hesitantly forming the sign Techno and him agreed on for food. Tommy blinked, wondering how long it had been. Was it lunch or dinner? Did he even care? He didn't want to eat.

He makes the sign for no before following it with food, Phil frowning at him for a long moment, not seeming to comprehend what Tommy was saying. He rolled his eyes and did it again. Phil blinked, his mouth opening in an 'o' before he frowned.

Phil held up a single finger, telling Tommy to wait. He then got up and turned towards the ladder, climbing back upstairs. Tommy didn't care either way. He still felt full from his eggs earlier and he didn't want any other food. He turned back to his books, stifling a yawn. His nap clearly wasn't enough. Note to self, don't stay up all night.

He tilts his head back to the paper, but couldn't find it in him to find the motivation to start reading again. He wasn't sure why. He wanted to, because he thought sign was actually very cool and would be very useful with his current issue, but his arms didn't move and his brain wouldn't catch up or participate with his actual thoughts.

There was movement out of the corner of his eyes and he looked up quickly, his entire body tensing. He cursed himself when he saw Techno in front of him, close enough that he could've attacked him and Tommy wouldn't have even noticed until it was too late. Tommy needed to pay more attention. He couldn't let himself be exposed to threats.

He stares up at his brother, who shifted on his feet awkwardly. He was holding two plates in his hands. Gracefully, he sat on the ground, not seeming to say anything before he pushed a plate over towards Tommy. It was simple, a couple pieces of bread and a single baked potato.

Tommy tensed up, waiting for the order to eat, waiting for Techno to stare at him until he lifted his fork to his lips and shoved food into his mouth. He prepared an array of comebacks, spiteful insults that would get Techno off his back.

But his brother didn't say anything, simply grabbed the second plate and a fork, cutting into the potatoes and shoving it into his mouth. He didn't even look at Tommy, who was staring him down intensely. He just started eating, casually sitting on the ground across from him.

That was odd. And not what he was expecting. Where were the orders? The expectations? The anger?

Tommy decided he wasn't going to eat his food. He didn't really understand what was going on and what Techno wanted from him, but he wasn't going to fall for one of his tricks. He was resolutely not going to eat and there would be nothing Techno could do to change that. He crossed his arms and continued to stare his brother down, waiting for the other shoe to drop. There had to be a catch.

Tommy hoped the awkward silence was getting to Techno. Or at least he thought it was awkward. Really everything to him now was an awkward silence and he kind of really hated it. He missed filling up silences with his voice. It had become a comfort in exile, when there was no one except himself around and he talked just to fill up space. That comfort was long gone.

Eventually, Tommy got bored. It couldn't be helped. He didn't feel like reading, and Techno's cow had gone to pull at his leash in an attempt to get at Techno's food so petting him was out. Techno wasn't saying anything, just slowly enjoying his food, and Tommy was running out of entertaining thoughts to have.

The food smelled insultingly good. Tommy would wager a guess and say it was even slightly seasoned. He stared at it out of the corner of his eye. He wasn't hungry per se, but it would be a stretch to say that he wasn't *not* hungry either. He was hunger indifferent. The food smelled good.

Maybe it wouldn't hurt to take a couple of bites. Maybe just a few. He knew he didn't have to, because although it was weird and suspicious, Techno hadn't said anything or alluded to forcing him to eat like he had last night. Tommy didn't think he had to eat, but it did smell good and his stomach was rumbling a bit in longing.

He wasn't breaking. He wasn't letting Techno win. It would be a waste of food if he didn't eat anything, and it would probably make Techno happy if he had at least a bite. Not that Tommy had any urge to make Techno happy. Slowly, Tommy reached out and grabbed the plate, ducking his head as he pulled it closer.

He glanced up at Techno, but he was still eating, not even bothering to look up at Tommy. Slowly, Tommy grabbed the fork and sliced into the potato, lifting it to his mouth and biting down.

It was surprisingly good. Not as hot as it probably was when it got down here, but still gave off a pleasant warmth. He could tell there was some butter melted on top, and the faint taste

of salt stung his tongue. He hadn't had salt in forever. If you ignored waking up with saltwater in your mouth every morning of course.

Okay, Tommy could admit that maybe he was hungrier than he thought he was and the meal was actually fairly decent. He refused to look at Techno as he ate a bit quicker, shoveling the food into his mouth in case he tried to take it away. He finished it fairly quickly before he started picking at the bread. Not nearly as good, since it was just buttered bread, but still kind of nice.

His plate was clean, and Tommy pushed it away, turning his head and once again refusing to look at his brother.

The plate was picked up and Tommy forced himself to look up, meeting Techno's eyes. He was holding both the plates in his hands and startled a little when Tommy actually looked up at him. Then, Techno lifted a hand and quickly signed 'thank you'.

Tommy felt something twist inside his stomach as he looked away. He didn't reply back, and he didn't see Techno go, but he knew his brother had wandered back upstairs. He sat downstairs alone for a while, not allowing himself to think about the strange interaction. He didn't want to think about what it meant.

Then he turned over and laid down to go to bed. The floor was cold and hard and hurt his back. He fell asleep within moments.

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Tommy doesn't know how much time needs to pass to qualify as settling into a routine and he doesn't particularly care, but he thinks that he's managed to settle into a bit of one.

It's been six days since Phil showed up, and they've all settled into a routine. As expected Techno and Phil have their own little thing, and Tommy's just kind of there. Like a lump they're morally obligated to keep. Tommy tries to shove himself away into a corner, but Phil takes the time every morning to coax him upstairs under the promise of cooled honey lollipops and other treats if he managed to eat breakfast with them.

Techno had re-opened the little hole he had shoved Tommy in when he left, opening it up and adding in a proper bed. He said Tommy could decorate it however he wanted, so Tommy made a point to steal most of his gold and hang up giant chunks of it everywhere.

It wasn't home, just a place to stay. Tommy loved it either way.

His days were simple. Phil woke him up, guilted him into coming upstairs with his wide kind eyes and pleading smiles, and they'd all eat breakfast together, Techno and him signing whatever they could manage. Phil was trying to learn as well, but Tommy noticed a lot of the time his hands were shaking too much for it to be very effective. Techno never mentions it, so Tommy doesn't either. He had some sense of boundaries after all.

After breakfast Tommy normally reads his books, although where he does it differs. If he's feeling bad, like there's a wall between his mind and his body and everything shakes with



anger he can't restrain, he sits in his room or beside Techno's stupid cow. If he feels slightly better than normal he'll sit on the couch upstairs where he can snack on golden apples and throw the cores at Techno whenever he passes by.

Sometimes when he's having one of his worse days he'll pull out his music discs and stare into nothing. Sometimes if he turns it loud enough he thinks he can hear a faint warbled hum. He doesn't turn it loud enough very often.

Sometimes Phil will sit him down and the two of them will do something together, although they never really talk. It's hard to these days. Tommy finds himself communicating mostly through facial expressions, raising his eyebrows and crinkling his nose. Phil seems to understand what he means most of the time, writing his response because Tommy isn't that good at lip reading to follow long conversations.

For most of the day Tommy's alone. Apparently the farm and all the animals take a lot of time, and Techno and Phil are often out, tending to it or gathering items. Techno seems to be stockpiling supplies like they're expecting a nuclear war or something. Tommy doesn't know what to make of it all, so he doesn't try. He just sticks his head in a book and hopes to re-learn communication.

He doesn't talk a lot anymore, only when necessary. Half because he really doesn't like communicating that way and finds it a lot easier to depend on sign language, half because speaking sometimes brings him bad memories. Sometimes he speaks and all he can see is Dream in front of him telling him to shut up. Sometimes he speaks and can only hear Tubbo and the others telling him to stop being so annoying.

But he's been dealing with those issues for a while. He only just now has an actual valid reason for not wanting to speak. And neither Techno nor Phil force him to use his voice, as much as Tommy figured they would. They will eventually of course, when they get bored of trying to understand his signs and grow frustrated by his uselessness.

He has what Phil refers to as his good days and his bad days, and he hates them both. He doesn't seem to understand why his good days are considered good, when really it just means he can complete the most basic human functions like getting out of bed and not flinching at every small movement the others make. It's not some big fucking step forwards when he's able to act like a normal person and he wishes everyone would stop acting like it.

Either way, his good days are when he comes upstairs willingly without Phil or Techno needing to drag him up. His good days are when he feels okay to utter a few words, when he only feels slightly apprehensive playfully arguing with Techno over something stupid. When he can laugh and joke around like he used to. His good days are when he can sit with Phil and not think of his father's hands covered in Wilbur's blood.

His bad days are worse. Tommy doesn't like calling them his bad days because really they're just his days. He thinks this is just his life now. He has a lot of bad days, when his hands shake and don't feel like his own. When the numbness creeps in and he feels so fucking useless and ridiculous at not being able to do simple things like hearing what Techno's saying to him. When he can't eat and lashes out because anger has always felt better than the bone-deep despair that makes him want to tear out all his hair and scratch his arms into bloody

messes just to feel anything. Just to get back any semblance of normalcy. He stays in his room for most of the bad days.

The weirdest thing about everything was that Techno and him are getting along strangely well. Tommy could almost say that Techno's being kind of nice to him. Tommy hates it but also clings to it like nothing else. He knows it's out of pity. Techno found him half dead and deaf in the snow. He must think Tommy's some kind of charity case or some sort of damsel in distress. Some weak little injured animal he has to take in and nurse back to health.

Tommy hates it. He hates it more than anything and he hates how his brother's new endless patience with him makes something inside his chest tighten with what almost feels like hope. He hates how happy it makes him every time Techno puts in the effort to sign back at him. He hates how he craves his brother's soft gentle guiding touches when Tommy isn't looking the right way and Tommy really wishes Techno would just get it over with and hit him or yell at him.

He hates the kindness and he loves it and everything is so screwed up in his mind and he thinks if he thought about it for more than five seconds he might shatter into a million pieces. So he doesn't think about it. He doesn't think about a lot of things recently. It's a lot better to just turn off his mind and hope for the best.

He's pretty sure if he starts to think he'll want to go back to Dream, because Dream's his friend and the only person who treated Tommy exactly the way he should. And yeah it sucked and yeah it hurt a lot, but Tommy would take whatever he could get. Dream was trying to help him be better. Tommy needed to be better. If he got better then he could go home.

But that's never going to happen now. Tommy broke the rules and he left. And now he was fucking deaf, so even if he learned how not to fuck up every relationship he ever had, it wouldn't matter because he's fucking useless now.

It's been over a week since he first got here and Tommy's going stir-crazy in this house. He can only sit and read for so long, no matter how dedicated he was to actually learning something. And there wasn't really anything else to do in this house. If Phil suggests making bracelets one more time Tommy was going to take his chances out in the snow once again.

Besides, even if he wanted to do something, Techno was insistent on him sitting down and resting. Something about him not wanting Tommy to fuck himself up again after all the work he put in towards fixing all of his injuries. So Tommy had nothing to do. Phil tried to help, but his dad wasn't someone known for sitting around all day. He was normally out with Techno or flying around trying to regain strength in his wings.

Tommy decides enough is enough, and he grabs Techno's cape.

Currently, he knows Phil was out exploring the area around them, and Techno said something about going out and checking on some issues with the farms. Which was fine since those farms were what gave them all food, but Tommy was bored.

He tried reading but his attention was shot, and every time he sat down to do something his mind would start to wander back to Dream and L'Manburg and Tommy really wanted to see how long he could avoid those thoughts. Hopefully forever.

So he decided that he was going outside. No one was around to stop him, and Tommy couldn't stop hearing Dream's voice in the back of his head telling him to stop being a wimp and suck it up. He layers up, stealing some extra winter clothes from Techno's room. They were a bit too big for him, but Tommy pretended they weren't. He grabs an iron sword by the door and tucks it into his belt.

He steps outside. It's silent. Of course it is. He isn't sure why he's still noticing that. Everything is quiet. He walks down the stairs out into the snow and it doesn't crunch under his feet like normal. He can feel the wind on his exposed cheeks but can't hear it howling past his ears. He looks around, cursing as he notices he doesn't see Techno. His thought process was that he was going to go over and see if he needed any help. Prove that he wasn't a useless prick that just sat around all day using up his supplies. Not that he actually had an issue with freeloading, he just wanted to make a point.

But Techno's nowhere to be seen. Fuck. Maybe this was a bad idea. He's so exposed out here, unable to hear and having to rely solely on his sight and other senses. But he wasn't a pussy. He could stand a bit of the unknown. He pretends his hands aren't shaking as he keeps moving forwards, searching for Techno.

He almost calls out for him, but that would be ridiculous as well. Not like he could hear if he responds. Tommy would just look like an idiot. He's already done that enough.

He heads behind the house, searching around to try and find his brother. Did he leave to go somewhere else without telling him? He probably did, that asshole. Tommy decides that he wants to be productive and helpful for once in his life and they don't even stick around to take advantage of that. How annoying of them.

He turns to head the other way before something darts across his eyeline, heading full speed towards him. Tommy feels his heart stutter to a stop as *something* rushed at him, too fast for him to react. He stumbles back with a cry, something slipping past his legs and knocking him off-kilter, sending him sprawling to the snowy floor.

He lands with a cry, hands reaching and grabbing for a sword but shaking too much to get it out of his belt as he sat there, getting up to his knees as he looked around frantically for the cause of his distress, his heart pounding as he looks around frantically, trying to catch sight of something. Was it a mob? Some sort of trap? Was someone here?

He sees something move again to the corner of his eye and whips his head around, staring in disbelief as a small white rabbit stares at him, its pink nose twitching before it darts away again.

A rabbit. It was a *fucking rabbit*. Tommy just got the shit scared out of him by a rabbit.

Against his will he feels tears gathering in his eyes. The snow is soaking through his cape and layers and he's really cold and his heart is going a thousand miles per hour. He can't hold the

sword with how bad he's shaking and he feels really pathetic and it's all because of a fucking rabbit.

He climbs to his feet and practically runs inside, tearing off his outdoor clothes and tossing them to the ground, climbing down into his makeshift room and shoving himself into the corner immediately, his vision swimming with tears that he hates more than anything.

First he gets scared by a stupid rabbit and now he's crying for no good reason.

That was the first time he had been outside since the entire thing. He had been excited to go outside, to do something other than sitting around and doing nothing. All he wanted to do was simply go outside, something he's done literally a thousand times before. And he couldn't even manage that.

What would he have done if it was an actual mob? What if it had been Dream? Tommy would have been screwed. He was weak, vulnerable, and pathetic. He couldn't save himself, couldn't protect himself against a fucking rabbit, couldn't do anything except mess up. How long until Techno and Phil realize just how useless he is to them? When they realize he's a pathetic fuck up who can't even go outside without spiralling into a panic attack?

It was fucking bullshit. God, his entire life depended on being useful. What was he meant to do now? Now that he couldn't fight in any wars, couldn't lead their armies, couldn't gather their supplies or help build their things. No one would want him around. What was the point to it all if he was fucking useless?

He forces himself to stand up, swiping at his eyes with his hand, hating the tears falling from his eyes. He had nothing to cry about. He got himself into this situation, he needed to deal with it and stop being such a cry baby.

He stumbles over to his jukebox, feeling off-kilter and exhausted. He grabs a disc from his ender chest that he put beside it. The color betrays it as Chirp and he puts it in, cranking up the sound and leaning back against it as hard as he could.

He couldn't hear it, although he swears he can hear a slight warbling from very far away, but it relaxes him instantly. The familiar hum behind him, the drop as the lower notes came in, the vibrations of the creaky old machine as a whole.

He sits and stares at the stone walls, willing his hands to stop shaking. The iron sword was placed beside him, even though he's sure he'd probably be useless with it either way. His mind races, cursing and screaming over what happened and how he can't even manage to walk outside anymore.

He wants to close his eyes but every time he does paranoia creeps up behind him and he has to fling them open again, half expecting Dream to be there with his smiling face, disappointment radiating from him.

He isn't sure how long he sits there, but eventually he watches as Techno's feet appear on the ladder, his brother climbing down. Techno stares at him for a long moment, no doubt analyzing him. Tommy hopes he doesn't look that shitty. He knows he does.

“Did you go outside?” He shakily signs, and Tommy stares at it for a moment before quickly signing back his disagreement, shaking his head and frowning. He can’t let Techno know. Techno prided himself for his strength and admired it in others. Tommy would be out on his ass the second Techno realized just how low Tommy had fallen.

He doesn’t think Techno believes him due to the frown on his face and the awkward stance, like he wants to say something more but is choosing not to. Eventually, he just shrugs and turns away, disappearing back up the ladder.

Tommy tries not to feel sad about that. He fails. He’s doing that a lot.

## Chapter End Notes

Would you guys believe me if I said the next chapter is actually a happy one?

Anyways I hope you're all having an amazing day/night!! Remember to eat and drinks lots of water! And get some sleep!! Take good care of yourselves!!!

# Inpatient they start fearfull they end

## Chapter Summary

Tommy builds a tower

## Chapter Notes

This is what we call complete and utter filler cause I had to change around the format of most of the story lol. But it is happy!! Which I think we need with everything going on in canon lol. Anyways it's a lot short than I wanted it to be but that's fine cause a lot happens in the next four ish chapters so eh

Hope you enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

They're eating supper later that night when Techno knocks his hand on the wood, the movement catching Tommy's attention. Techno's eyes aren't meeting Tommy's, but he keeps his mouth fully visible while he talks.

"Want --- outside with (width?) me?" He says, and Tommy blinks, feeling his previous fear and panic spike inside of him when he thought of the disaster that occurred earlier that day. How he went out by himself and got scared by a rabbit of all things. How he realized just how incapable his lack of hearing seemed to make him.

What would happen if Techno figured that out as well? He wouldn't keep Tommy around if he didn't think he was useful. So far there hasn't been a catch to this entire arrangement, but there had to be one eventually. Techno was just bidding his time. And if he figured out that Tommy wouldn't actually be any use to him, well who knows what will happen. Tommy's not eager to find out.

He realizes they're still waiting for an answer and he quickly shakes his head, staring down at his plate and trying not to tense up at the thoughts running around his head. A book slides into his vision and he debates ignoring it. But he sees Techno's finger tap it aggressively and knows that's not a choice. Demanding bitch. He rolls his eyes, picking it up and flipping until he got to the most recent page.

*I thought it would be nice if you built something. Just to get out and do something so you don't tear my house apart in boredom. And I don't have anything planned tonight, so I figured I could help out if you needed it.*

Tommy stared up at his brother, confusion spiking through him. Techno wanted to go out and build with him? Techno and him had a lot of weird bonding practices, such as arguing and trying to murder each other, but this was weird even for them.

“You want me to build something?” Tommy asked, raising an eyebrow. Techno shrugged, looking a tiny bit embarrassed as he pulled the book back over and scribbled into it.

*As long as you’re not going to build some ugly cobblestone tower or something.*

Any reasonable feelings of doubt or fear evaporated immediately at the words, a feeling of amusement sparking inside of him as he grinned. That sounded like a challenge.

“Oh don’t you worry Technoblade,” Tommy bounced slightly in his seat. “I’m not going to build an ugly cobblestone tower.”

“Thank god,” Techno said, the words a familiar sight on his lips. Tommy liked when he could read someone’s lips with little trouble.

“I’m going to build the most beautiful cobblestone tower you have ever seen,” Tommy said as his grin widened, taking pride in the way Techno’s own face fell. Tommy let out a laugh, jumping to his feet. Techno was scribbling in the book again.

*I regret saying that. The offers taken back.*

“Too late!” Tommy said cheerfully, grabbing the last piece of bread and shoveling it into his mouth. “The offer was made and I took it. No take-backs. Let’s go!”

He jumped up, grabbing at Techno’s arm and pulling at him. The hybrid looked disgruntled, sending a sad look at the rest of his meal before rolling his eyes and standing up. Tommy turned to Phil.

“You coming?” He carefully signed, his father blinking in confusion before looking over at Techno. Tommy assumes Techno translated because Phil’s eyes lit up with understanding and he started speaking.

“No, it’s ----” Phil spoke just a bit too fast and Tommy didn’t really catch anything other than the first bit, but he tried not to let the dismissal get him down. His father probably had a good excuse with how much he talked and Tommy didn’t mind.

Maybe it was better it was only Techno. Only one person around if he failed.

Tommy turned and bounded to the door, where Techno was waiting with a cape and a bunch of other winter gear along with a set of basic iron armor. Tommy tried not to think much as he put it on, focusing on the fact that he could build another cobblestone tower and piss Techno off. He ignored the fear he had of going outside, especially since night was an hour or so away and that made everything so much more dangerous.

Maybe this was a test, to see if he was useful enough for Techno to keep around. And despite the way his hands started to shake with the idea of going outside and being so out in the open

without being able to use his hearing to detect threats, the excitement of actually doing something was getting to him. He had been so bored these past couple of days.

He hurried to put on the gear, wrapping himself up in the clothes before darting to Techno's storage compartments. Thankfully, there were tons of cobblestone lying around from some of Techno's recent strip-mining adventures. He figures he might be able to get a fairly good-looking tower out of this.

He grinned as he raced upstairs, Techno visibly sighing when he saw the amount of cobblestone Tommy was carrying. Tommy just grinned at him, bouncing on his heels before taking a deep breath and walking outside for the second time that day.

The cold hit him at the same time the fear did. And he had to take a steadying breath in to calm himself again. Techno was beside him, and Tommy was 80% sure Techno would alert him to any dangers that were coming his way. Despite it all, a big part of Tommy trusted Techno. He wasn't sure why. Trusting people hadn't done him a whole lot of good recently.

Techno was signing to him, something about Tommy stealing his supplies, but Tommy turned his head the other way, steadily ignoring his brother. Techno grabbed his shoulder and pointed him to the side of the house, probably trying to tell Tommy to build the tower as far away as they could.

Tommy ignored him, happily walking over to the front of the house, trying to figure out where the most inconvenient place to put it was. Tommy knew Techno liked to sit in the chair by the window and look out this way, so Tommy tried to guess where he could put the tower so it would be directly in his line of sight.

He started placing down the basic blocks, the familiar motion soothing him slightly. He built these a lot, because he thought they looked nice and it also pissed people off because none of them had any taste.

"Don't build there," Techno was signing at him, but Tommy just looked the other way and started humming loudly as if to tune him out. He started humming one of Wilbur's old songs, but he wasn't really sure if he got the tune of melody right. It didn't really matter much in the grand scheme of things. He continued building. Techno gave up at some point, and Tommy couldn't resist the grin when he saw his brother throw his hands into the air in exasperation.

It was nice to know that despite it all, he was still able to smile and be a little shit. He didn't know what he would do if those got taken away from him.

The initial fear was starting to wear off the longer Tommy stayed outside without a mishap. It was still strange, to know that the wind was howling and cobblestone was clinking together without actually hearing it. But he got used to it, the same way he had adjusted to not hearing little things like people's voices or his own breathing.

It was still weird as fuck, and sometimes he would sit and stand as still as possible to try and attempt to hear anything. It never worked, and all he had was a blanket of silence that covered everything. He tried not to get down because of that.



Soon his tower was growing bigger, Tommy knowing the best strategies to getting up a tower as fast as possible. He'd glance over at Techno every now and then, seeing him standing to the side, often not looking at Tommy but surveying the area around them, a hand resting on his sword. Sometimes though Techno would be looking at him and despite Techno not really giving a lot in the department of facial expressions, Tommy could see the disbelief and disappointment over the, quite beautiful if he had to say so himself, tower. It was actually kind of fun.

Building wasn't something Tommy enjoyed at all, but his towers were familiar. The cobblestone never let him down. It was a nice strong and sturdy block. And it looked beautiful. Complimented the surroundings quite well. Tommy thought every biome needed a nice strong cobblestone tower around.

Tommy worked for so long that he barely even noticed the sun dipping in the sky and disappearing along the horizon. He just kept building away, because normally killing mobs that got too close to him was second nature. He didn't even have to think about it much, so he didn't.

Not until he felt a rush of air dart past him, reminiscent of the rabbit that had scared him not that long ago. Tommy found himself turning with wide eyes, fear already spiking inside his gut as his hand flew to his sword, adrenaline spiking.

All he saw was Techno beside him, sword drawn and pierced through a zombie that Tommy guessed got a bit too close for comfort. Techno ripped his sword out with what Tommy guess was a very gross wet noise before he was sticking the sword in the snow, leaning against it as he turned back to Tommy.

"Continue," He signed as if it was no big deal, like he hadn't probably just saved Tommy from a big bite wound that he didn't even know was coming.

Did Tommy fail? He missed the mob and almost got himself hurt. But if it was a test why would Techno save him either way. Tommy didn't understand, so he turned back to his work and tried to push the issue out of his mind.

Tommy wasn't sure how long it took, but he'd wager a guess and say it was probably another hour. An hour of carefully stacking up chunks of cobblestone and smoothing out large towering walls. An hour of Techno killing every single mob that got within fifty feet of him without saying a word or expecting Tommy to do anything about it.

Half an hour into the night Tommy was on the top of the tower when he noticed a spider crawling up the wall, coming towards him fast. Techno was still on the ground, the mob seeming to have slipped past his radar. Tommy reached for his sword, pulling it out and readjusting his grip just in time for the mob to lunge at him. Tommy side-stepped with practiced ease, slashing his sword down and through a few of the monster's legs. The arachnid turned back to him, mouth opened in an ugly hiss. Tommy forced back a spike of fear darted forwards and struck once again, impaling the creature and tossing the corpse off the side of the building. He was only half aiming for his brother, who shot him a dirty look.

Everything felt a bit better after that, his nerves almost disappearing. He was still a bit on edge, especially with the amount of strays out, but it was nice to know that losing his hearing didn't actually impact his fighting that much. He wasn't completely incapable. And having Techno there as a glorified bodyguard was useful too.

At some point Tommy started talking. He wasn't very sure why, but words were coming a bit easier when he had something to distract himself with. He rambled about everything he could, and sometimes when taking small breaks he would sign it instead, even though he wasn't very sure Techno could see him in the darkness.

Every time he looked over at his brother, Techno would sign something short, mostly just affirming that he was listening and telling Tommy to hurry up. Tommy tried to ignore the stab of happiness that spiked through him every time he did. It encouraged him to start talking louder, which he was sure Techno appreciated so much.

Soon enough Tommy had a very nice, beautiful, stunning cobblestone tower, and Techno had a headache. It was a good night.

## Chapter End Notes

The next chapter is already written so it should be out fairly soon to make up for how long this chapter took me to get out lol. I have ADHD and kept forgetting to post it lol. Go memory problems!! Also, it's important that you guys know that I wasn't sure if I was spelling the word 'arachnid' right and decided to google search it while completely forgetting I'm deathly afraid of spiders and freaking myself out when I was faced with a bunch of pictures lmao. Not always the sharpest tool in the shed lol.

Anyways how are we all feeling after Tommy's last few streams? So much has happened guys. I am perfectly content with chilling here in this little au I made. Anyways I hope you're all having a lovely day/night!!

# sitting back and also breathing

## Chapter Summary

Tommy in a box, what will he do? Probably have a panic attack.

## Chapter Notes

Do I have an excuse for how long this chapter took me to get out? Nope! Enjoy! <3

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Tommy decided that today would be a good day.

He felt lighter than he had in ages, waking up from a dreamless sleep with some pep in his step. He went upstairs for breakfast without Phil having to come downstairs and coax him up. For some reason they were having carrots for breakfast, but Tommy didn't mind all that much. He always had a taste for carrots anyways. He finds himself missing his little carrot farm back at home.

He pushes that thought out of his mind. He was determined to have a good day. Maybe he'd follow Techno around outside again, just to reassure himself that he could, that the incident with the rabbit was a one-time issue and not how the rest of his life was going to be.

He was teaching Techno the signs he learned last night, his brother seeming amused at how he kept signing the word for 'elephant' over and over again for no reason. Both Techno and Phil were trying to keep up, but Tommy was proud to say he was a lot better.

They were pretty much ignoring their food now, instead the three of them were rapidly signing in some sort of competition. Tommy would sign some bullshit sentence that he came up with off the top of his head, and the two of them would have to translate and then repeat it back to him. Whoever got it first got a solid high five.

It was nice. Tommy was smiling, and he was buzzing with energy. It was nice, the two of them trying to learn sign for him. Phil was laughing at something Techno said, and when Tommy turned to his brother Techno tried his best to sign out the words. It was nice. It almost felt like a family.

He was shoving some more carrots into his mouth when Techno looked down at his communicator, frowning slightly. He clicked a couple of buttons, probably opening a message, and his face completely darkened.

Tommy hated that about Techno. He was not the most expressive person. His only two emotions seemed to be neutral or mad, and that made it kind of hard to tell what his brother was thinking at any point in time. It was driving him insane, not knowing if Techno was mad at him or not. But even Tommy knew that face wasn't good.

"What's wrong?" He asks, Techno not even bothering to look up from his communicator, tapping away at the screen. Tommy turned to Phil, who seemed to be saying the exact same thing. He turned back to Techno, who slammed his communicator down before standing up and turning, rushing to the chests.

Tommy stood up, not really understanding the sudden shift in the mood that occurred. They were having a good day weren't they? What went wrong? He didn't understand. Phil had stood as well, coming up beside Tommy and placing a hand on his shoulder. Tommy hated how much the touch grounded him in his panic as well as making his stomach turn.

Techno turned back to Tommy, holding a milky light purple potion bottle that he shoved into his hands. Invisibility.

"Dream's on his way. Hide," Techno signed, and Tommy thinks his entire world screeches to a stop.

Dream was coming. Dream was his friend; Tommy should be glad to see him. Dream deafened him. Dream hurt him. Tommy's entire world was spinning. How had Dream found him? He doesn't remember if he left a trail, and even if he did why hadn't he shown up sooner?

Techno suddenly snapped in Tommy's face, causing him to flinch back. He was holding out a note, impatience written all over his body. He was tense, his bore mask now firmly anchored on his face. Somehow the lack of seeing his face made things worse. It meant this was real.

Dream was almost here. Tommy didn't know if he should be excited or terrified. He was swinging mostly towards terrified. Dream couldn't learn about what happened to him. He would be the only one to fully understand just how messed up Tommy was. Dream had always seen Tommy under the mask. Tommy doesn't think he would be able to stand the disgust Dream would give him.

He takes the note with shaking hands, because he doesn't want to piss off Techno on top of it all. Techno and Phil were his only real hope here. Fuck he hopes that they don't turn him over. He liked it here, despite it all. He wanted to stay, even for just a little while longer.

*Don't panic. Hide in the box and don't make a noise. He has no reason to know you're staying with me, and he won't get you as long as I'm here.*

Tommy isn't sure how, but the note helps calm him down. A promise written on paper that he had to believe or else everything would go to shit. Techno was here. Techno wouldn't let Dream hurt him. He wonders where this certainty in his brother came from, but he doesn't want to question it at this moment. That was more of a panic at the early hours of the morning type of thought.

Tommy uncorks the potion and chugs it as fast as he could, a bubbling burning sensation running through him. There's a sharp stinging sensation throughout him and he takes a deep breath, pulling a face. When he looks down his hands aren't there. It's as weird as the first time he drank an invisibility potion.

Techno's suddenly reaching towards him, tugging on the loose iron chest plate he had been wearing ever since he woke up. Sometimes he put on the armor just to feel a bit safer in his surroundings. Techno is smacking him lightly, and when he looks Techno's signing.

"Armour off," He signs, and Tommy blinks, his mind starting to rush again as memories flooded in. Dream reaching towards him, forcibly tearing the armor off of him and tossing it into the ground. He can almost hear the cutting order, the boom of explosions. He can almost feel the stinging pain of the blast burning him, of small metal shards digging into his skin.

Techno's hands are on his shoulder, tugging the armor off harshly and Tommy lets out a soft whimper despite himself, tugging his mind away from the memories and trying to anchor himself in the moment. Phil had moved closer from where he had previously been stuck at the window, a note of concern on his face. Techno waved him off, turning back to Tommy.

"You're okay. You're invisible. Hide, he's almost here," Techno quickly signs, and Tommy nods, pulling together the fragmented pieces of his mind in order to stumble over to the small box in the side of the room. Tommy had gotten pretty good at repressing his panic in order to get through dangerous events, he's had plenty of practice over the years.

He opened up the trapdoor on top, maneuvering his lanky limbs into it before shutting it on top of him. It was very small. The walls seemed to close in on him and Tommy had to shut his eyes, pretending like he wasn't there. Pretending like he wasn't trapped in a tiny box with Dream on his way. Fuck he hated small spaces. His mind flashed dangerous to the final control room, to the piston in Pogtopia. His mind really hated him today.

He opens his eyes up again, because being without both of his main two senses was going to drive him insane. Dream right now was a threat, despite how much that thought made Tommy want to cry. And Tommy couldn't be completely vulnerable to threats.

It's dark in the box, only a few rays of light shining through from the small splits in the wood. Tommy tries to ignore the fact that the walls are pushing against him, the space seeming to collapse on top of him. It was too small. He was going to die here.

He shifts slightly, trying to be as quiet as possible as he peeks out of one of the larger holes. He needs something to focus on besides his panic. Techno and Phil stand at the open door, and they step back to reveal a familiar smiling mask.

Tommy inhales sharply, fear spiking through him once he realized what he did. He raises his hand to cover his mouth, trying in vain to quiet his breathing. He doesn't know how loud it is. He hopes no one can hear it.

No one moves or even looks towards him, so he figured he isn't making too much noise. Or maybe Techno and Phil are just making more. He doesn't know.

Dream is right there. Less than ten feet away from him, wandering through the house, face angled towards the roof as he sweeps his gaze across the room. For a horrible second Tommy thought the mask stopped while staring right at him, but it only lasted a moment before moving on.

He tries his best to silence his panicked breathing as he watches his family interact with Dream. He doesn't know what they're saying, what words are being exchanged. Techno was tense, but he always was so that's not that big of a surprise. Phil's face was hard and his wings were puffed out slightly, ruffling in annoyance. Dream looked relaxed, completely at ease.

Tommy has no idea what's going on. For all he knows they could be ratting him out at this very moment, talking about how useless he is and how much space he takes up. They could be making a deal together right now with Tommy's life being on the line. He has no way of knowing. He never will. Panic rises up his throat and he has to force it down. Panic and fear at a moment like this could mean losing it all. All it took was one mistake and Dream would find him and it would all be over.

The three of them go downstairs, and Tommy starts to panic even more. It helped a bit, having them all in sight, but now he was alone trapped in this small ass box with Dream downstairs and no way to know what they're saying. Part of Tommy wants to leap up and find the man, to beg for forgiveness and his friendship back. The other part of him wants to curl up into a ball and never come back out.

Dream was going to find him. He'd take him back to the ruins and start blowing things up again. He'd hit him and scream and Tommy wouldn't be able to hear or respond so he'd only get more mad. And Tommy wouldn't be able to stop it, he wouldn't be able to be good enough for him. Maybe Dream would kill him, slice into his skin with his ax, blow him into a million pieces, or maybe just beat him to death. Dream was not a picky man.

His hands are fumbling in the small space, reaching for his pockets and he hopes he isn't making any noise. Fuck they're going to find him and Dream was going to kill him and it would be all his fault for not being able to shut the fuck up for five minutes. Tommy's hand gripped a round surface and he brought it up to his mouth, biting hard into the golden apple.

The absorption filled his veins, filling him with a pleasant warmth that clashed against the bubbling feeling of invisibility. It was comforting, the rush of adrenaline and the swelling of his veins. He crunched a few more, trying to eat it as fast as he could so the sounds didn't carry.

He felt invincible, and his heart rate slowed a bit. The panic was dulled by the light feeling flowing through him, everything sharpening until he could focus again. He put his eye back to the hole. Still no one there. He wondered what they were talking about, when they would be coming back. The only thing worse than having them in sight was them being gone. He was horribly alone and very aware of the threats that swam around him and the small space he was trapped in.

Techno and Dream were back, but Phil wasn't in sight. Tommy hated how they were both wearing masks. He couldn't even tell if they were talking. He had no idea what they were

thinking with their faces covered. He really hated masks. He thinks masks should be officially banned. Except maybe Ponk's mask. Ponk's mask was cool even if Ponk was a bitch. And Sam's. Sam had a nice mask.

Either way, Techno and Dream were standing beside each other, and Tommy tried to study their body language for any clues on their feelings. Techno's shoulders were tense. His hands weren't clenched into a fist, but his fingers were tensing and relaxing in a way that told Tommy he wanted to be. He looked imposing and angry, but that seemed to be Techno's default so Tommy wasn't really sure what that meant.

Dream was the complete opposite. He was relaxed, leaning back slightly with his hands in his pocket. He was wearing armor that was gleaming with enchantments and his ax was strapped to his back, but he seemed completely harmless. He didn't even look angry. His shoulders were loose and his head was high. He almost looked like he was gloating. Tommy hated it. He didn't want to know what that man could possibly be smug about.

Before Tommy could even blink, Techno was suddenly moving, hands tensing into fists before they were raised and slamming into the side of Dream's face. Tommy barely resisted the urge to let out a strangled yell, hand flying over his lips as he watched with wide eyes, fear racing through him. No one hit Dream and got away with it.

Dream stumbled slightly to the side, a hand raising to touch the spot where Techno hit. His shoulders were shaking like he was laughing. Tommy wants to curl into a ball and scream. He waited to see if Techno would hit him again, but Techno said nothing, just ripping the door open.

Dream held up his hands in surrender, shaking his head before making his way out the door. It was slammed shut but Tommy didn't stop staring at it, shock and fear racing through his body. Techno had just punched Dream in the face, and Dream hadn't even cared. He seemed almost amused.

What the hell happened? What were they talking about? What had pissed Techno off so badly? Tommy hated this. He hated not knowing. He hated being left out and not being able to understand what he used to. He hated how useless he felt. He hated this fear.

He isn't sure how long Techno stands at the window, probably watching Dream leave, before he turns and walks to the box, opening the top. Tommy looks up at him, still not moving.

"Safe," Techno signed, and Tommy felt himself relax a bit, carefully climbing out of the box and out into the open. His hands are shaking. He doesn't know why. Techno had turned around and walked to the kitchen, coming back with a glass of milk that Tommy chugged without hesitation. The potion effect sizzled away, burning out of his veins and leaving him feeling suspiciously empty, leftover panic from the whole event starting to settle in and weighing down his bones.

He turns to Techno, who was still wearing his boar mask. Tommy waited for him to take it off like he always did. Techno didn't and they stood there awkwardly.

“Did he know?” Tommy managed to sign, not trusting his voice. His hands were shaking but he thought his brother understood either way. Techno hesitated for a long moment, hands raising and then falling twice.

“No,” Techno signed back, shaking his head. Tommy waited for more, maybe an explanation about what happened, but Techno just turned and walked away, climbing up the ladder to his room. Tommy stared blankly at his back.

Phil climbed up the stairs from downstairs, looking at Tommy and pausing for a moment before he came closer. His hand made its way to Tommy’s shoulder and Tommy tried his best not to recoil away from it. He really doesn’t want to be touched right now. He doesn’t voice that to his father, and Phil doesn’t seem to notice his discomfort.

“You okay?” Phil carefully signed, and Tommy noticed his hands shaking as well. Tommy just nodded, blinking back tears. Dream was right there. Dream was so close. Dream was his friend and Tommy hid from him like the coward he was.

Phil’s hand was back on his shoulder, guiding him to the couch and gently sitting him down before he sat beside him. Thankfully he sat far enough that they weren’t touching, but a single wing wrapped around Tommy’s shoulder, the weight familiar and not as slimy as Phil’s hand had felt. He relaxed into it slightly, remembering days many years ago when he’d have nightmares and Phil would wrap his wing around him in comfort.

He missed those days, when his biggest worries were the creatures that went bump in the night. When an enderman was the most terrifying thing for him to see. He wonders what six-year-old Tommy would think if he could see him now, deaf and traumatized, unable to even see his friend without his hands shaking with fear.

He leans into the wing a bit more, the soft feather a comfort despite it all. Phil doesn’t seem to say anything else, content to just sit there beside Tommy and let him stew in his thoughts. Tommy stares at the ground and pretends that he isn’t crying. Phil doesn’t mention the tears, and Tommy’s grateful for that. His entire body is shaking and he half wants to rush into the cold and hunt Dream down with apologized falling from his lips.

Should friends make him this scared? Was Dream even his friend? He had been there in exile when no one else bothered to be. He had given Tommy gear and advice and helped him set up the party and all the paths. Dream had given him a trident and let Tommy fool around with it even after he was annoying. But Dream hurt him a lot. Should friends hurt each other?

Tubbo had hurt him. Eret had hurt him. Wilbur had hurt him. Every other friend Tommy could think of had let him down or betrayed him in some way. They had all left him behind. Was Tommy just that easy to abandon? At least Dream visited, at least Dream appeared to be searching for him.

For the first time in a while, Tommy let himself admit that he missed Tubbo. He wanted his friend back, wanted to hear his voice and see his smile and pull pranks and make jokes together. He wanted to go home. Wanted to not be so afraid.



He wonders if Tubbo misses him the same way. He doesn't think so. If he did he would've visited in exile. If he did he wouldn't've exiled Tommy in the first place. Maybe Tommy was forever doomed to care about people more than they cared about him.

He cared about Wilbur, had tried so hard to bring him back from the insanity he was constantly teetering on, and Wilbur instead decided to hurt him and blow up L'Manburg. Wilbur decided to convince Phil to kill him because that was better than dealing with the consequences of his actions, it was better than dealing with Tommy. And Tommy would have given up everything for Tubbo, had on multiple circumstances. Only for Tubbo to just send him away and never even come to visit. He never bothered.

And then there was everything with Dream but Tommy didn't want to think about Dream right now. He couldn't, not when the man had been so close and Tommy had hidden like a coward. What would happen now? Would Dream keep looking? Would he ever find him? Was he even looking for Tommy in the first place? He had no way of knowing since both Techno and Phil didn't seem to be telling him. Tommy would never know.

Tommy was fucking tired of not knowing.

## Chapter End Notes

I lied I do have an excuse my dogs got super sick and school got hard lol. But after next week my work load should get lighter so updates should be coming out a lot more consistently!! I wrote this chapter ages ago and just was too busy to post it and now I'm too lazy to re-read it so I don't really remember what happened in it but I hope you all enjoyed!! Let me know if it sucks lol

Also happy april fools everyone! I've been pranked four times today lol. Hope you guys are able to pull some good pranks and that you don't get pranked too badly!!

# St. Bernard sits at the top of the driveway

## Chapter Summary

Techno gets a few new friends

## Chapter Notes

You ever get like, bad writer's block but only for like one chapter? Anyways I was going to give you guys a Techno perspective on the last chapter but that just wasn't working with me so you guys are left with only vague hints of what happened :) Anways, new character this chapter! I've been excited for this one if I'm going to be honest and I hope you guys enjoy it!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Techno wants a dog.

He thinks a nice dog would be a good way to ease some tension around the house. He remembered fighting alongside a deaf soldier years ago, one of the best fighters he ever knew despite his disability. Also one of the few men Techno was able to tolerate long enough to spend time with him outside of the battlefield.

The man, when off duty, had a dog that followed him around, alerting him to things like when someone called his name, any sudden loud noises, or any conversations he should be following. The man told Techno that he trained the dog himself, and once when drunk admitted that if it wasn't for that dog, he probably would have died many times over just crossing the street. Easy to say that Techno was impressed.

The man died in an attack soon after, and Techno looked after the dog for a month before it too passed. He had never seen an animal and a human so connected, a bond that seemed to mutually benefit both parties. He thinks that Tommy might like an animal like that. A cute little dog that would follow him around and alert him when people called his name, or point him in the direction of someone talking.

Or maybe help him hide from potential assailants Tommy couldn't hear, or help him through the waves of panic and anxiety that he seemed prone to. Techno could train a dog to do that right?

The only problem was that he'd have to leave to somehow find a dog, and he wasn't quite sure to pull that off. He was a bit paranoid since Dream showed up.

Techno didn't like thinking about that visit, the casual way Dream talked about missing Tommy, wanting to make sure he's okay. The calculated way he mentioned Wilbur, imploring both Techno and Phil not to fail another member of their family. The sharp way he brought up past grievances, making Techno himself wonder what in the world he was doing. Techno had punched him hard in the face and didn't regret it in a bit. Possibly ruined a strong ally, but he wasn't sure he ever wanted help from that man again. Not after what he said. Dream's words had a way of wrapping around you. Techno took them with a grain of salt, but the problem with good manipulation was that most of it was based on truth.

And even if he wasn't paranoid that Dream would show up to snatch Tommy out from under him again, the even bigger issue was Tommy's attachment problem. In the weeks since Tommy showed up, even when standoffish and hostile and a genuine pain in Techno's ass, Tommy didn't like it when Techno was out of his sight. Even Techno leaving for a few hours to tend to the farm was enough to send the boy spiraling, although he'd never admit it.

Tommy followed him around like a lost duckling, practically stepping on his cape while simultaneously calling Techno a massive bitch. It was worse now that Dream showed up, Tommy not leaving him alone for longer than five minutes. He'd even join Techno outside to grab things from the farms, despite being clearly terrified and jumpy, head swiveling in hopes to see an enemy that wasn't there. It had only been a few days since Dream showed up, but Tommy showed no signs of letting up in his clinginess.

Normally it wouldn't be that big of an issue if Phil was around to tide over Tommy's anxiety, but Phil left the day after Dream came, something about having to tie up some loose ends.

But Techno saw the shake in his hands and the faraway look in his eyes. He remembered the harsh words Dream spoke so casually, about how Phil failed Wilbur as a father, and how he hoped he hadn't somehow messed up with Tommy once again. It was enough to make Techno snarl in anger, outraged for someone hurting Phil in such a way.

Techno understood that his father needed space. He needed to move and run from everything around him so he didn't get swept up in the memories and the guilt. Techno loved Phil with his entire heart, but just once he wished his father would stand still for longer than a few weeks.

Either way, Phil was gone, Tommy was barely functioning, and Techno wanted a dog. And maybe he was running too. Running from the way Tommy stared at him ever since Dream left, like he couldn't decide if he should be accusing him of something or not. The way he walked on eggshells again, flinching at every sudden movement Techno made like he was at risk of getting hurt but at the same time snapping as if he was testing some kind of limit Techno didn't know existed. How Tommy woke up screaming almost every night and Techno couldn't even manage to climb down a ladder in order to properly comfort him.

And Tommy was also fucking annoying. No amount of pity and sympathy could change that. Tommy talked non-stop at an almost ear-shattering volume, and the fact had finally sunk in that if he simply didn't look at Techno there was no efficient way for Techno to tell him to shut up or interrupt him without smacking him, something Techno wasn't keen on doing. Not after seeing the way Tommy flinched away from every raised hand. The past few days have

been non-stop commentary about everything and Techno was seconds away from ripping out Tommy's vocal cords just to get it to stop.

He just needed a day. A day to be by himself and bask in silence, to pretend that he didn't feel like a failure of a brother for once, a day to just go out and find a fucking dog that he could tame and train to deal with Tommy when he didn't want to. So when he got up early one morning and saw Ghostbur floating towards the house with that same stupid blue sheep, he saw it as the biggest opportunity he'd get for a while.

"Techno!" Ghostbur called out, waving and jumping up slightly as he saw Techno open the door. "Oh it's lovely to see you, how are you doing?"

"I'm alright Ghostbur," Techno said absently, watching as Ghostbur clumsily tied the sheep to a post, the animal attempting to chew on his sweater. "Can you do me a favor?"

"Of course! I would love to," The ghost smiled, drifting closer as Techno opened the door wider for him, shepherding him in. "What do you need me to do?"

"Can you look after Tommy for the day?" Techno asked, already shuffling through some chests for the supplies he needed. He just wanted out of this damn house.

"Tommy's here?"

"Yes Ghostbur, Tommy's here, and you can't tell anyone about that fact okay?" He turns, stressing the importance to his ghostly brother, who nods with wide eyes. "He also can't hear, so you can communicate with him using this book okay?"

He raised the paper up, waiting as Ghostbur seemed to process that, frowning slightly.

"He can't hear?" Ghostbur sounds somewhat faint, and Techno realizes that maybe that wasn't the best way to break the news. Techno really hopes he doesn't disappear because he's sad or anything like that. He still isn't quite sure how Ghostbur works.

"Yeah, it's a new thing but it's alright, we're adjusting," He says awkwardly, and Ghostbur seems to accept it, blinking and grinning once again. He figures it's fine. "But again, don't tell anyone okay? Big secret I'm trusting with you here."

"I can keep a secret for you Technoblade," Wilbur nodded seriously and Techno resisted the urge to smile at his brother's seriousness. "Is Tommy around? It's been so long since I've seen him."

"He's sleeping still I think," Techno winces slightly. Tommy had woke up screaming only hours ago, but he thinks he went back to bed due to the lack of stomping around. Tommy had been sleeping in more often, especially since Phil isn't around to pull him out of bed every morning. Techno would attempt to drag him upstairs earlier, but he generally got a kick in the face if he tried. "Just wait for him up here. He doesn't know I'm leaving."

"Oh," Ghostbur's brilliant blue eyes widened. "Is this another secret I need to keep for you?"

“Just for now,” Techno said, grabbing a bunch of bones and some salted steaks, shoving them into his bag. That should be everything he needed, along with the usual traveling essentials. “I’m heading out now, I left him a note on the table, point him towards it when he comes up. Just keep him in the house and make sure he doesn’t do anything bad okay? I’m trusting you here Ghostbur.”

“Sir yes sir!” Ghostbur chirped with a grin. “I won’t let you down Technoblade. Tommy and I will hang out here and I’ll make sure he doesn’t do anything bad.”

Techno takes a second to stare at his dead brother, taking a deep breath in. Maybe Ghostbur would be good for Tommy. Phil and him were out of their league. Neither of them knew how to deal with Tommy, never having to much in the past. Wilbur was the only person who could control him.

But Wilbur was gone. Wilbur was never going to come back. Ghostbur might be the next best thing they had.

“I’m leaving,” He said again, turning and walking out the door before the ghost could get another word in and before he could have any second thoughts. Tommy was fine. He’d be able to survive for a day or two on his own. He won’t always have Techno and Phil there to hold his hand. This was for the best. Attachment issues weren’t healthy and it was best to nip it in the bud.

He ignored how the further he got from his house the more nervous he got, something in his chest settling uneasily. Tommy was fine, he would be fine. Techno wouldn’t be gone for that long anyway. He was overreacting. Tommy must be rubbing off on him.

He wanders for a while, not saying a thing and simply taking in the land around him. It was peaceful out here, with only the wind and chat to keep him company. He passed a few animals, who all stared at him with muted interest. Chat echoed in the back of his head, talking nonsense as he wandered without a real plan in sight, trying to find an oak forest so that he could see if there were any wolves or other dogs sitting around. They tended to flock to forests to hunt and hide from other predators.

He stopped for lunch, munching on some carrots and checking his communicator for any new messages. There were none and he wasn’t sure if that made him feel better or not. On the good side, it meant that Ghostbur managed to placate Tommy enough to stop him from sending him a million angry messages, or it meant that Tommy had burnt everything down and ran or got himself killed by doing something stupid. No in-between with that kid.

This might have been a bad decision. Tommy had been upset with him lately after he refused to tell him anything about his encounter with Dream- a decision he still stands by, Tommy didn’t need to hear the bullshit Dream was spewing- and leaving so soon after when Tommy was still clearly paranoid might piss his brother off enough for him to do something stupid. Techno can only hope that Tommy’s frail self-preservation will kick in.

Even worse was his own paranoia kicking in. He wanted to get away from Tommy, but just having him out of his sight was stressful. What happened if Dream showed up while he was gone? Or Tommy wanted to go outside and got hurt? What if Tommy just left? He had a

history of running. Techno wanted his brother to stay put. He wasn't sure how he'd explain to Phil how he lost Tommy once again. Or how he left and Dream managed to grab him.

He couldn't think about that or else he'd drive himself insane. Since when did he care so much about Tommy anyways? He knew he had been a bit more prone to overprotectiveness due to Tommy's new disability, but this was just getting ridiculous.

He continues on his hunt. He ends up going a lot farther than he wanted to, but he finally finds a good oak forest that seemed filled to the brim with animals. He finds a dead sheep a little ways in, clear bite marks on the side. He figures a wolf might be near, although he frowns at the slightly sloppy kill. He pulls out a few bones, shifting them in his hand as he walks as silently as he can as to not scare it away.

The forest was silent around him, the bright green leaves shifting slightly in the wind. The sting of fresh blood is still sharp in the air, and Techno figures it won't be much longer until he finds the animal. Hopefully it doesn't decide to attack him as well. As long as he plays this well as doesn't aggravate it, he figures he might be fine.

He hears the animal before he sees it, a low threatening growl filling the air around him. Techno paused, standing very still and slowly reaching over to unhook the guard on his weapon before waving the bone around in the air. The growl tapered off a bit, more of a warning than a threat as the animal caught scent of the treat. Techno slowly moved forwards, making sure he wasn't making much noise as he looked around.

He saw the dog lying in the foliage, staring at him with brilliant blue eyes. Their lips were pulled up into a snarl, but they were still lying down, wrapped around what looked to be an injured side. He could see some blood smeared in the fur, although it could possibly be from their previous meal.

"Hey buddy," Techno said lowly, crouching down a few feet away and holding out the bone. "Not here to hurt you."

The dog let out a whine, still looking at him skeptically. He tossed the bone closer, landing it a few feet away, and waited as the dog sniffed, grabbing it in its mouth and biting down slightly, shaking its head side to side. Techno restrained a grin, moving slightly closer. It stared at him with distrustful eyes, but made no move to defend itself.

Once he was in arms reach it let out a low growl, and he stopped, reaching into his bag and carefully bringing out another bone, holding it out and staying very still. If he had to guess this was a wolfdog, very capable of ripping his throat out if they wanted to.

"Go on," He said lowly, and the dog moved forwards, carefully grabbing the bone and pulling the bone out of his grip and taking it. Techno reached to pull out another, offering it to the dog, but instead of taking it they leaned forwards, carefully knocking their head against Techno's hand, nuzzling it gently.

Techno grinned to himself, dropping the bone and carefully reaching out his fingers, brushing it through their matted hair.

“There we go,” Techno praises lowly, pulling out a steak and ripping off a piece, offering that as well. The dog happily grabbed it, swallowing it down within seconds. “Can I take a look at your side?”

He carefully moves his hand to the dogs side, hovering his hands over the injury while he waited for the dog to relax. It took a few minutes of carefully sitting there, not moving even slightly until the dog relaxed, turning onto its side to get a better look. A quick glance confirmed his suspicion that it was a girl, and a closer look to her side showed that the injury wasn't as bad as he previously thought.

There was a single slash mark, probably from a zombie wielding some sort of weapon. It was mostly healed over, the blood mangled in her fur dried and crusted. Nothing that wouldn't be fine with a single health potion.

She wasn't exactly what he was searching for, much older than he wanted and probably not going to be easy to train for the complex things he needed her to do, but he couldn't just leave her out here after they'd bonded. He wasn't one to get attached, but that felt unnaturally cruel even for him.

“You're not hiding any puppies under there are you?” He asked, only half-joking. The sun was setting, and he should be heading back now. There was no more time to search for more. Hopefully showing up with one dog would be enough to tide Tommy over in the morning as a *'Hey sorry I left you alone for a day without any warning. Hey look! A puppy!'*

The dog rose up to her feet, shaking out her fur and letting out a soft yap before turning and running away.

“Hey!” Techno cried, feeling slightly scandalized. “I thought we were friends here!”

The dog paused, turning and looking back at him before huffing impatiently, tossing her head in the direction she was going before starting walking again. She only went a few feet before stopping and turning around again. She wanted him to follow her.

“My house is back this way girl,” He said, gesturing the other way. She huffed again, and if dogs could roll their eyes Techno thinks she would be. She looked the other way and stomped her foot, tossing her head again. He gives in. “Okay fine.”

He followed behind her as she weaved through the trees, his sense of unease growing larger as the sun dipped lower in the sky. He had hoped to be out of the forest and possibly even in the nether at this point. Not following around a dog for some unknown purpose.

It was a bit of a slow process. She was limping slightly, heavily favoring her left side where the wound wasn't. He wishes he had thought to bring a potion with him, feeling bad that he was forcing her to be in more pain than she needed to be.

After ten minutes of walking aimlessly through the forest, he saw some lights up ahead. He blinked, looking around and trying to realize where he was. With a sinking feeling in his chest, he knew exactly where she was leading him.

“I am not going there,” Techno shook his head, frowning as he saw the twinkling lights of L’Manburg up ahead. He stops and the dog lets out a whine, sounding almost annoyed with him. He feels slightly affronted at her attitude. “I’m not a fan of that place, and they’re not the biggest fans of me. I go there and they try to kill me and I’m not really in the mood to be killing people right now.”

She huffed again, limping over to him and headbutting his bag. He blinked, opening it up to see what she was trying to get. He didn’t figure it out and she huffed impatiently again, so he put it on the ground, stepping back and letting her nose through it.

A second later she pulled out a small potion bottle, shimmering with a familiar liquid. He had forgotten he had that in there. An invisibility potion he had made months ago and tucked away for emergency purposes.

“Really?” He asked, and she dropped it on the ground, nudging it towards him. She was painfully smart and he wished she would use her brain for anything other than trying to get him murdered. “Fine. This better be good or else you’re sleeping outside.”

The dog, who had probably been living outside her entire life, did not look impressed by his threat.

He took off anything that wouldn’t be impacted by his potion and shoved it into his bag, grabbing the potion and uncorking it, chugging it down before he actually thought this plan through. Maybe he’d be able to get his weapons that they stole back. It’s a long shot, but surveying the area might be a good idea. In case destroying L’Manburg happens to move up in his to-do list. It’s sitting at a solid three at the moment, but who knows at this point.

The familiar tingling feeling covers him and he shakes it off, the dog moving once again and he followed her down the hill towards the streets after checking to make sure his arms were gone.

Luckily, since it was dark out most people had already gone to bed, the streets pretty much empty. He moves carefully, avoiding staring into the houses. He didn’t want to see the people there, smiling with happy families who could function for more than a few days at a time. He follows his dog a few steps behind as she carefully navigated the streets, seemingly intent on one purpose. He followed her with a hand hovering over his weapon, expecting someone to jump out and attack him at any moment. He kept his eyes peeled for any sign on the so call Butchers Army.

The houses thin out, and they wander further away from the main L’Manburg area. He settles a bit the farther away they get from the more heavily populated areas. Eventually, she stops in front of a weird-looking gap in a wall, staring back at him for a second before disappearing into it.

He carefully follows her, ducking down in order to stare into the dark passage. She was sitting there, softly nudging at a small form. A few seconds later she walked back out, holding a very fluffy puppy carefully in her jaw.

“Oh,” He said for a lack of anything else to say. “You do have a puppy.”



She huffed, gently setting the puppy down. Techno crouched, holding a hand out. The puppy eagerly stumbled over to him, head bumping his hand and licking it with a small pink tongue. He was big for a puppy, obnoxiously fluffy as well. Clearly not her own, since they were two different breeds. An abandoned puppy she took in then.

Well, he did need a puppy, and the thick coat would be good in the arctic cold. He was adorable as well, which Tommy would appreciate.

He carefully picks the puppy up, cradling it in his arms and holding it up to his face. The puppy squirmed in his grip, leaning forwards and trying to lick his face. Techno huffed out a laugh, lowering it down and tucking it against his chest, running his thumb over his forehead. At his feet the other dog let out a soft bark of approval, headbutting his knee.

“You better be the best hearing dog around, because you are not worth the headache it took me to get here,” Techno muttered, the puppy squirming and butting his little head against his chest. Techno did not melt at that. definitely not.

“Hello Techno,” A voice called out from behind him and he froze, a hand already reaching down to grab at his axe before he swung it out, aiming it at the pink-haired lady standing a few feet behind him, holding a basket filled with freshly picked flowers. Niki didn’t even flinch at the weapon pointed at her, a soft smile on her lips.

“Uh, you don’t see me?” He tried, panicking slightly. He wasn’t sure where he stood with her. They had an easy truce together down in Pogtopia, where he admired her guts and she forced him to actually sleep when he tried to stay up late grinding. But she was a part of L’Manburg, and he was the number one wanted criminal.

“Your invisibility potion ran out a few seconds ago,” She said, raising an eyebrow. Looking down proved she was right. He should have been paying more attention. His dog let out a soft growl and Niki smiled, pulling out a small piece of jerky and tossing it to the animal, who immediately turned and scarfed it down. Traitor.

“Well this is just awkward,” He admitted, lifting his weapon up higher. How didn’t he notice her walking up? He was better than this. “I might have you kill you, no hard feelings though.”

“Oh of course,” Niki’s smile only grew, and she seemed almost amused despite him being armed and her not wearing any armor or holding a weapon. “There’s no need for that though, I’m not going to turn you in. Although not a lot of people will notice if you kill me, I would personally prefer if you didn’t.”

Okay well now he was just confused.

“I was just coming by to feed the puppy in your arms,” She pointed to the dog, pulling out a small tin of what looked to be shredded chicken. “Why do you need a hearing dog?”

“That’s classified,” He said awkwardly, shifting the dog closer and looking around for an escape route from this conversation. “Aren’t you supposed to be reporting me?”

“I don’t really care.”

“I’m public enemy number one,” He said, feeling a bit dumb. She just shrugged, not seeming bothered in the least bit. “I killed your president, summoned a few withers.”

“I’m aware,” She looked at him dryly, seemingly very unimpressed at his attempt of intimidation. She nods at his hands. “You’re currently clutching onto a puppy. You don’t look very harmful. Do you know how to train him?”

“Sure,” He said, very much lying. He was winging it and she very clearly knew it.

“Who are you training him for? You’re clearly not deaf.”

“I might be deaf,” He said, shifting on his feet uncomfortably. She levels a glare at him.

“You’re not deaf,” She repeats. She puts down her basket, lifting up her hands and appearing to sign a few words. He catches none of it, her hands moving too fast and skilled for his own clunky comprehension of sign. She smirks slightly at his lost look. “Definitely not deaf yourself. Sign language is the first step, and something I would recommend before training a hearing dog.”

“How do you know how to do that?” He asked, slightly impressed. Tommy was the most fluent person he had met so far, and Tommy’s own slow signing didn’t even come close to the fluency that Niki displayed.

“A regular in my bakery was deaf,” Niki smiled. “I can teach you if you want?”

“Why are you being nice?” Techno asked slowly. “Again, enemy of the state here. You gain nothing from offering to help me.”

“Well I’m also a bit angry at the government right now, and helping you feels like a productive and reasonable way to get back at them,” She smiled, and he noted a sharp note to it, a look in her eyes that he recognized in his own.

“I like the way you think,” He smiles back. He thinks this might be the start of a decent friendship. She grins at him, picking up her flowers once again.

“Come to my bakery tomorrow night. I can start teaching you,” She nods, and Techno hesitates for a moment. He should start to learn, if not for himself then for Tommy. Learning himself by the books wasn’t helping much, and if he manages to learn then communication would be so much easier.

If he was being honest he hadn’t really been trying to learn as much as he should. He knew it was important, and he knew it was going to be the main way of communicating with his brother, but it wasn’t the easiest or most fun thing to do. Tommy tried to help but really he was quite possibly the worst teacher in the world. So Techno had been avoiding learning more than their required phrases, passing by with clumsy fingers and decent knowledge. He needed to start putting in an effort, and what better chance was there than someone skilled in sign literally offering to teach him?

But does he trust her? He's standing in enemy territory, with his armor but not his good weapons. He's at risk here, and although he knows he would be able to beat most of the fighters here, he doesn't really feel like getting into a fight at this moment. Niki could have turned him in at any point, in fact, it would probably benefit her to do so.

But she didn't even make a move to run and get anyone else, and didn't seem alarmed at all over seeing him just wandering in the streets. He wasn't a very trusting person in general, but in the long list of people who had hurt him, she wasn't one of them.

"I'll be there," He decides without giving it another thought. For Tommy. And maybe gaining trust with someone on the inside would be a good thing.

"Good," She smiled, brushing a hair behind her ear. "Might I ask who it's for? Is Phil okay?"

"Phil's fine," Techno shifted awkwardly. "It's for Tommy."

The smile falls off her face, her jaw ticking as she nods, looking away.

"How?" She asks, her voice losing a tiny bit of the warmth it had. He isn't sure what to think about that.

"He won't tell me. It's been a struggle," He admits, watching for her reaction. He probably should have thought about her stance with Tommy before admitting his newfound disability. "It's also very hush hush, and I won't hesitate to kill you if you tell anyone."

"I could imagine, I won't tell anyone," She looked down, conflict clear on her face for a second before it smoothed back out, her eyes snapping up to meet his. There's a determined look on her face. "When he's better he could come too. Teaching both of you at once would be easier."

"He's exiled."

"I don't mind," She says as if it's obvious.

"He doesn't like leaving the house," He said, because it's true. Tommy never really left the house and asking him not only to leave but go To L'Manburg where he was exiled seems like a bad idea. The boy could barely handle quick movements, let alone traveling into enemy territory.

"We'll figure it out," Niki shrugged. "Give him my love."

"Will do," He said awkwardly, the puppy in his arms squirming. They stood there awkwardly for a few seconds, neither of them really knowing what to say next. Techno thinks he might choke on the embarrassment lying around them. There was a reason he never got out much.

"Well," Niki said after a second, clearly just as awkward. "Tomorrow night. Be there or else I'll turn you in."

She turns and leaves, and Techno finds himself somehow not in the least bit worried about his presence being reported.

He looks around, making sure there was no one else before he made his way for the city limits, slipping into the portal with his dog slinking by his side, the puppy snuggling into his chest and letting out a yawn.

He starts the trek home. If he keeps moving at this pace he'll be back home by the morning. Tommy better appreciate this gift, because he isn't quite sure it was worth the headache and the social interaction it took to get it.

## Chapter End Notes

Hope you guys enjoyed! If you're wondering where Phil went I'm going to be completely honest with you guys, I planned out about 90% of this fic totally forgetting that I needed to bring Phil in somehow, and I added him in after planning most of the story out. This chapter was one of the ones where he just hadn't shown up yet but I didn't want to completely rewrite it cause I really like what I had planned so I needed to just get rid of him for it to work out plotwise lmao. And maybe we'll get another sad Phil chapter at soon because I really want to give some background to Phil and the family as a whole.

Anwyays, I image Techno's dog to be a wolfdog, but the little puppy is a malamute simply because I love malamutes and I love the idea of Tommy having just this giant fluffy dog with him at all times. Make sure you guys are drinking lots of water and eating a bunch of food!! Hope you're all having a wonderful day/night!!

# And I may never trust at all

## Chapter Summary

Tommy tries to bond with Ghostbur, they get rudely interrupted. We learn another lesson about horrible miscommunication and how it fucks shit up

## Chapter Notes

y'all ever decide halfway through a story to completely rewrite the ending you had planned out?? no?? just me??? cool

Also thanks for all the love on the last few chapters!! All your comments mean the world to me. Also, shout out to people recommending this story to others, because nothing makes me happier than randomly scrolling through social media and seeing a bunch of people recommending this fic. It makes me so unbelievably happy every time and you guys are all so lovely <3

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Tommy was not having a good day. In fact he was having a pretty shitty day and he hadn't even gone upstairs yet.

He woke up with Dream's name on his lips and the memories of bruising hands and exploding bombs. He hated waking up from nightmares, screams dancing on his lips and no way to tell if he actually uttered them.

They had been happening more frequently now that Dream had made his unannounced visit, the feeling of walls closing in on him joining the mess of trauma he relived every night. He's barely able to sleep after the nightmares, staying up late pretty much every day in a vain attempt to starve them off. He's maybe gotten five hours of sleep in the past week. He feels half dead stumbling around, clinging to Techno at every turn.

Phil had left again. Tommy doesn't know why he's surprised. Maybe he thought that Phil would stay this time, after seeing how Tommy pathetically needed him. Tommy thought that maybe since he had some big issue, maybe Phil would stay and help fix him too. Like he did with Techno.

But obviously there was a difference between him and Techno. And of course Tommy didn't need Phil, he was a big man after all. He could deal with this fine all by himself. He just

needed a couple more days, maybe a week or two. He could become functional enough by the time Phil came back.

He doesn't know what time it is. He wonders if it would be worth it to bug Techno for a proper clock down here. Now that Tommy thinks about it, there weren't any clocks in the entire house. Not that it really mattered, since they both gauged time by the sun, but there weren't many windows down here to help him with that. He'd bring it up to Techno at the table.

Speaking of which, he should probably go upstairs either way. Techno had finally stopped trying to drag him upstairs like Phil did, but he'd also throw a fit if Tommy didn't at least eat two meals a day. Something about getting him back up to his normal body weight. Tommy hasn't been at that for years, even before exile. He didn't have enough time to get his weight back up after the effects of the food shortage in Pogtopia.

But Techno valued food, and Tommy valued Techno not kicking out, so they found themselves at a standstill. Or really less of a standstill and more just Techno forcing Tommy to eat and Tommy having no choice.

He climbs to his feet, swaying slightly in the way he always did when he got up these days. He rubbed at his eyes as he climbed towards the ladder, carefully pulling himself up despite the sore muscles. He patted Bob on the head on the way, the cow playfully headbutting him as he walked by.

He walked into the kitchen, heart stopping when instead of seeing his piglin brother, he saw his very much dead one instead.

He ignores the way his heart stuttered when he saw Wilbur's face, the way he recoiled even through Wilbur- no Ghostbur, was smiling pleasantly at him. Tommy hates thinking that his older brother, who pretty much raised him for a good portion of his life, is now someone who he instinctually flinches away from. He doesn't want to think about it, he's not thinking about a lot of things these days.

"Ghostbur?" Tommy asked, blinking at the ghost, who waved cheerfully at him. Tommy looked around frantically for Techno, but the pig was nowhere to be seen. "Where's Techno?"

Ghostbur starts talking, but his lips are moving much too fast, and he slightly glitches out every few seconds, making it practically impossible for Tommy to understand anything he's saying.

"I don't know what you're saying to me Ghostbur," Tommy said, frowning as he looked around again, grabbing a piece of paper and sliding it over to his ghostly brother. "Write it down for me. My hearing's shit now."

Understatement of the year, but he didn't really feel like explaining the actual condition he was in. Not that Ghostbur would remember in five minutes anyways. Ghostbur's frowning at him, a troubled look on his face but he grabs the pen and starts writing a message out either way. Tommy's shoulders sag slightly in relief.

It seems like writing isn't Ghostbur's strong suit either. Every few seconds the pen would slip through his fingers, making Ghostbur roll his eyes and try again to pick it up and hold it properly. Tommy got bored of the song and dance after a few minutes, turning to rummage through some of Techno's chests, carefully noting the items inside. He wasn't overly hungry, so he didn't go towards the kitchen to get some breakfast. He was sure Techno would be in at any moment to force feed him anyways.

Techno was probably just out tending to the farm or something. Tommy hates the uneasy feeling in his chest that comes with his brother being out of his sight. He hates being this ridiculously co-dependent, but he can't help it. Despite their past disagreements, Techno comes with a feeling of safety. Even if that safety wasn't always guaranteed, Tommy knew that not a lot of people wanted to mess with Techno.

And maybe he liked hanging out with Techno. Maybe a small part of him though Techno was cool as fuck and liked the weird brotherly bonding they were forced into having. Either way, Tommy much preferred Techno to Wilbur at the moment.

But Ghostbur wasn't Wilbur, and it wasn't overly fair of Tommy to keep making that comparison. Sure Ghostbur was technically a part of Wilbur, but at the same time he was a completely new person. He wasn't Wilbur, not really. He had his own interests, his own memories and personality. He had bits of Wilbur in him, his best memories and happy thoughts, but he had grown into something else separate to Wilbur. He was a person, who was a bit frustrating to deal with sometimes, especially with the memory issues and constant naive mind, but Tommy knows it's not fair to judge him on that either.

He could judge him on the other things though. Like promising to stay by his side during exile only to ditch him at the earliest convenience. For pretending like anything that had happened in exile was okay, that Tommy was okay. Ghostbur had become a willing bystander to Tommy's misery, and when things got hard and Tommy needed him most, he disappeared. Sure Tommy didn't hate Ghostbur, but he had fucked up. Tommy can already feel the faint sparks of anger rushing through him like an old friend, and he has to stomp it down quickly. He doesn't want to be an asshole and upset Ghostbur, not when he needed answers out of him still.

Ghostbur annoyed him, sure whatever. Ghostbur abandoned him in a way that felt so hauntingly like how Wilbur died without another word, after promising to see him again, and maybe Tommy kind of hated him for that. But that wasn't fair. Nothing about this was fair. Ghostbur hadn't really done that much to hurt him in the grand scheme of things.

But, it's still Wilbur's face. The same Wilbur that raised him. That loved him. That hurt him. Sometimes Tommy thinks he's more afraid of Wilbur than he was with Dream, because at least he knew what was coming with Dream. Wilbur's treatment of him wasn't supposed to happen. Wilbur wasn't meant to spiral like that, wasn't meant to lash out and hurt everyone around him, hurt Tommy, because he wanted an excuse to go off the deep end.

So even though Tommy knows that Ghostbur isn't Wilbur, he still jumps when he's suddenly in his face, grinning and holding out the note.

Tommy grabs the piece of paper, jerking it out of Ghostbur's grip and ignoring the way the ghost's smile dropped for half a second. He frowned down at the scribbled words, practically illegible even by his standards. Wilbur had beautiful writing. Ghostbur very much did not.

*Hello Tommy!! It's very good to see you again. Techno left earlier, so I'll be looking after you for the day! It'll be so much fun. He left you a note in the kitchen if you want to take a look.*

Great. That's great. Techno just up and left him here by himself with an amnesic ghost. Which was fine, because Tommy could take care of himself, but he would have liked maybe a bit of a fucking warning. Maybe a heads up to let him know he was just abandoning him again. Tommy had thought that was more Phil's thing, but he guessed it must have rubbed off on him during the years they ran off together.

Did Tommy do something wrong? Was this some kind of punishment? Why would Techno just up and leave for no reason? Tommy can't help the crawling anxiety in his gut, the feeling that he was once again abandoned and left behind for being too much, but he pushes it away. Thoughts like those were better dealt with late at night when no one else was around.

He says nothing to the ghost, walking into the kitchen and immediately eyeing the piece of paper lying on the table, right next to a plate filled with some sliced bread with butter. Breakfast probably. He picked up the note, immediately recognizing Techno's elegant scrawl.

*Out for errands. Should be back by tonight, maybe early tomorrow. Made you breakfast, eat it. Don't burn my house down.*

Techno always had such a way for words. Tommy debates burning the house down for fun just to spite him. Imagining how pissed the pig would be if he did that makes him think twice. Maybe no arson for him today. Fucking lame.

Ghostbur had followed him in, and by what Tommy could see he was still gleefully chatting away. He rolls his eyes, not even bothering to try and pay attention. He pretty much just ignores the ghost as he pulls the bread towards him, angrily pulling off a slice.

He wasn't mad. Not really. He was fucking pissed. He thought that maybe Techno and him were getting somewhere, and by somewhere he meant not to the point where Techno refused to tell him about a day trip he was planned. Tommy thought they were trying to do the whole communication thing, even if it was hard with his faulty ears.

He couldn't help but feel a bit betrayed, just a tiny bit. It wasn't like he'd kick up that big of a fuss if Techno told him he was leaving. Or well, maybe he would have. He did like making a big deal out of things just to piss Techno off.

But still, his point stands. Leaving him here alone, dick move.

He wasn't technically alone, but Tommy thinks he'd rather be. It doesn't matter if Ghostbur means well, he's a bit of a dick.

Speaking of which, Ghostbur is waving a hand in front of his face, grinning at him and pointing down at the piece of paper in front of him like a child showing off their latest shitty



artwork. Tommy blinks down at the paper, noting the new scrawl added on. Guess Ghostbur remembered the whole deaf thing, how sweet of him.

*We have lots of time to do some cool things. I'm trying to remember the whole writing instead of speaking thing. Do you want to do something? Maybe go out and build something?*

"I'll pass," Tommy scrunched up his nose, remembering all his last attempts at building. The tower was tons of fun, but Ghostbur didn't like his towers much. He'd want him to build something sophisticated like a cabin or some shit. And Tommy didn't want to go outside. Not without Techno. Somehow having Ghostbur around to look after him wasn't that reassuring.

He looks up in time to see Ghostbur's smile fall, face crumbling as he looked down at the table, becoming a few more shades transparent. Great, now he was the asshole. Tommy blinks, letting out a sigh as he tries to think of something else to say. Taking his frustration out on Ghostbur wasn't very fair, no matter how pissed at the ghost he was. Ghostbur probably didn't even remember what he did wrong. As much as Tommy loved being petty, Ghostbur was his only companion at the moment and the only thing worse than dealing with him was being alone.

"I could teach you some sign?" He offered, resisting the urge to smile when Ghostbur's face lit up at the suggestion, clapping his hands together. "Then we can communicate easier, especially if you're hanging around more often. Reading your lips is impossible and your writing is shit, no offence."

Ghostbur was nodding, standing up and gesturing at Tommy wildly, trying to pull him back into the living room. Tommy let himself smile, shoulders dropping as he relaxed slightly. Maybe this wouldn't be that horrible. He just had to get through the day until Techno showed back up, then he could stop feeling this restlessness in his chest. For now he could stay inside and amuse his ghostly brother.

They sit in the living room, Ghostbur floating over to the fire and quickly lighting it using the flint and steel before sitting beside Tommy, practically vibrating in his seat. The blue sheep, that Tommy honestly only just noticed, had put its head in Ghostbur's lap, eating his sweater. Ghostbur didn't even blink.

"Well, here's to hoping you're a better learner than Techno," Tommy said, shaking out his hands and mentally running through his signs as he tried to plan what to go over first. He decided to go with finger spelling, because that was where he learned and would probably be the most useful to teach to others.

At the barest minimum, as long as everyone was fluent in the alphabet he could somewhat understand them. It would take forever and be annoying to try and spell and figure out the words in his head, but the alternative of knowing nothing was a thousand times worse. The whole writing and reading thing was fine, but almost embarrassing to have to do. The process of waiting there awkwardly while they scribbled something out, the way their shoulders collapsed into a sign every time they had to do it, Tommy just wanted something to himself, a way of communicating that didn't feel like a burden. He misses just being able to talk.

Ghostbur is an interesting student, that's for sure. And Tommy wouldn't go around saying he was the best teacher, his skills were a lot more aimed at wooing women and not explaining how things work, but he did his best. Ghostbur was eager to learn, smiling and nodding along and being a lot more engaged than Techno or Phil ever were.

He learned the alphabet within an hour, easily copying Tommy's movements and mimicking them back, even if he sometimes took short breaks to show off his skills to the sheep, who really didn't seem that interested and just kept eating away at the sweater.

After a few trials and errors, Tommy learns that as long as he keeps the interaction lighthearted and doesn't look too depressed about everything, Ghostbur's able to retain the information. He got the hang of it after three frustrating times of having to explain to Ghostbur that no, he cannot hear him and he's trying to teach him something at the moment. Tommy just needs to keep a level head. It means he has to bite back a few scathing remarks here and there, and there's an uncomfortable tightness in his chest that seemed to shift with every time Ghostbur laughed.

He looked just like Wilbur. Or at least how Wilbur looked before everything went to hell. It's still hard to separate them sometimes, to remember that they were two distinct people. A small part of him, a part that he fucking hates and wants to shank until it stops talking and whispering bad thoughts into his head, wonders how Wilbur would have reacted to this.

Would he have even cared? Would he have been angry over it? Would he have stayed up late nights learning sign just so that they could have talked again? Would Wilbur have held him close and promised that they would figure things out together?

Or would he have laughed? Would he have told Tommy that it was all his fault? Would he scoff at this sign and just kept talking, leaving the task of figuring things out to Tommy?

He'll never know and he thinks it might drive him insane. But maybe he could pretend with Ghostbur. It wasn't fair to the ghost, or to him really, but he couldn't help it. Maybe he wanted to make more memories with his brother in hopes of drowning out the abundance of bad ones.

Ghostbur had decided fingerspelling was too boring for the moment and was running around the room, the sheep at his heels, pointing at different things and getting Tommy to do the sign. It was annoying the first few times, watching his brother run around laughing as if this was something fun and exciting and not a necessity.

But Tommy had never been very good at holding onto his anger for that long around Ghostbur. Something about the dead man eased Tommy's chest, making him feel more at home. Within minutes he was laughing too, pointing out the stupidest things and signing them out. He taught Ghostbur that the word for sheep was 'fucker' and the ghost signed it every few seconds. It was hilarious.

They settled down soon after, Tommy forcing his brother to sit down and focus again, simply because he wanted to ask Ghostbur where the hell he had been and actually get a decent response. Ghostbur slowly went through the alphabet one by one, his lips moving in a way that signalled that he was probably saying the letters out loud as well. Tommy was dully

following along, his own fingers spelling out the letters easily. It was one of the first things he learned and he made an effort to go through it at least once or twice a day to try and commit it to memory.

Ghostbur's fingers form the words pretty easily, especially compared to the other people Tommy had taught. Techno's fingers weren't really used to the movement, much for suited for strength rather than fluidity, so the words were clunky and stiff. Phil's hands seemed to shake often, making finger spelling especially hard for him. Ghostbur was fairly good at it though, even if he sometimes glitched out and disappeared for a few seconds, which could be a problem. Tommy's own sign language is tilted and odd in the way that it was bound to be as a result of learning it on the fly, but he's trying.

He knows the longer he keeps at it the easier it'll get, or at least that's what he hopes. It may not be totally fluent or even really correct, but even broken and a bit clunky it works when talking to Techno and Phil, who really were the only people he'd ever have to talk to. He's screwed if he ever has to interact with other people.

He actually hadn't thought about that yet. What would happen if he needed to talk and communicate with other people? Would he ever be able to communicate properly with them? Would Tubbo learn sign language for him? Quackity? Fundy? Jack? Any of them? Did it even matter, since he didn't know if he would ever talk to them again?

What about people he didn't necessarily know? Even if he never talked to his friends again, an idea that hurt more than he'd like to admit, he couldn't stay cooped up in this house forever. At some point he'd have to go out and meet new people, talk to them. Would he be able to? Sign language wasn't that universal, and writing things down really wasn't that smart of a tactic.

Tommy loved talking. He loved interacting with people and making jokes and listening to people ramble. Would he ever get that again? Was he forever doomed to shitty interactions with people who only ever gave half of an effort in? How was he supposed to grow up and live his life like this?

He knew people did, knew that people lived their day-to-day life with disabilities and got by pretty well, but he simply didn't know how. No one was around to teach him; Techno was just as clueless as he was. He had no idea how to live his life like this, no idea what the next steps he needed to take were, how to adjust to such a major change in his life.

He was stuck hovering in a horrible grey point, unsure about his life at every turn. He knew he couldn't stay here forever, knew that Techno's generosity would run out at some point, and then he'd have to find somewhere else to go. And where would he? L'Manburg didn't want him. That much was clear. He doesn't think he'll be strong enough to go back to Dream, not after everything that had happened. So he'd have to be on his own, figuring out how to live and navigate life with a disability he never thought he'd have and had no idea how to live with.

He feels something bump into his side and he blinks, looking down at the blue sheep who had decided to grab onto his sweater and start chewing. He lets out a shriek of annoyance,

pushing at the sheep's mouth and dislodging it from his sweater. He's just lucky it didn't get at the cape still wrapped around his shoulders. Techno would have murdered him.

Tommy looks up, looking around for his ghostly brother that he didn't even notice leave. Ghostbur was standing at the window, waving cheerfully at someone. Tommy felt himself perk up a bit, sitting up tall and leaning forwards to try and look out of the window. He would have gotten up, but the sheep had decided to plop his head in Tommy's lap and he wasn't that big of a dick to kick it off. His fingers idly scratch the animal's head.

"Who's there?" Tommy asked, trying to look out the window. "Is it Techno? Is he back early?"

Ghostbur shakes his head, and Tommy frowns slouching a bit. He had really hoped Techno would be back. Not because he missed him of course, but just because he wanted to bug him some more. Or something. He doesn't care.

Ghostbur's moving his hands, shakily spelling out a word. Tommy watches with growing dread.

*D-R-E-A-M*

Dream. Dream was here. *Again.* Tommy's flying to his feet, stumbling over to the window and peeking out, careful to keep mostly out of sight as his heart pounded wildly in his chest, fear snaking around his throat and threatening to choke him.

Sure enough, walking through the snow right past his tower, is Dream. He's wearing his armour, the netherite glinting in the sunlight. Tommy can't breathe. There's a rushing in his head and he feels Ghostbur's hands on his, faint but there and they make his skin crawl but they're freezing cold, which is enough to shock him slightly into motion.

He darts away, flinging the chests open and rummaging around with shaking hands, grabbing an invisibility potion and opening it with a crack, downing it within a second.

He turns to Ghostbur, who looked confused and slightly scared. Tommy doesn't have time to feel bad, running over to the box, opening it before looking back over to his panicking brother.

"Ghostbur I need you to promise me something," He says, wondering if his voice sounded as shaky as he felt. He pitched his voice low, in case Dream was closer than Tommy expected. "Dream can't know I'm here. He'll kill me if he does. You can't tell him a thing okay? Promise me you won't tell him a fucking thing."

Ghostbur is nodding, a serious look on his face. He seems to somewhat grasp onto the situation. If it was up to Tommy, the last person he'd want doing this was Ghostbur. But Techno was gone and so was Phil, so Ghostbur was his only hope.

He was screwed.

He didn't think of that as he slipped into the box, carefully closing the lid on top of him and curling up into himself, trying to calm the racing of his heart. The walls were too close once again. He thought one time in this hell hole would have been enough, but apparently not. He was back here, and Dream was outside and there wasn't a Techno or Phil here to keep him safe this time. Just an amnesiac ghost who couldn't lie to save his life.

He feels a whimper threatening to creep out of his throat and he curls up tighter, eyes snapping shut as he shoves his hand into his mouth, biting down hard so he won't make any noises. He knows he's hyperventilating, can feel the limited air supply pressing down on his lungs, and he can't help it. He tries to get it under control, knowing that any wrong move will give him away, but the panic had taken control of him.

He can't stop shaking, and he curls up tighter, the darkness pressing it at all sides. He feels horribly warm and he wonders if Dream had lit the house on fire. He had a habit of doing that, just running around blowing up people's places of residence. Fuck, Tommy's only rule was not to light the house on fire. So even if Dream doesn't kill him, he'd have to deal with a pissed-off Techno, which somehow felt worse. This was horrible.

He can't even open his eyes in order to look out and see what was going on. Now that his eyes were closed they felt glued shut, fear sliding over him and wrapping him up tight. He was going to die like this, useless and deaf in a box, hyperventilating cowering with no way of knowing what was going on.

He had thought this was over. Why was Dream back here? He had literally just been here, and had left without a complaint. Sure Tommy didn't know what happened during that visit, Techno refusing to say anything and Phil leaving soon after, but he thought it was fine. He thought that he had escaped once again.

He wasn't expecting Dream to come back under a week later. Especially on the one day that Techno wasn't there to protect him.

The day Techno had conveniently left without a word to him. The day when Tommy would have been alone, if you ignored the fact that Ghostbur was there.

Something inside his chest twists, and he doesn't want to think about it but he can't help the way the thought barges into his mind.

Was this planned?

Tommy had no idea what Dream and the others had talked about last time; Techno had gotten a dark look in his eyes every time Tommy tried to pry. And Phil had looked horribly guilty the days after, leaving almost as soon as he could. Did he feel bad about failing another child?

Techno left without saying anything to him, only leaving a half assed note on the table and sneaking off before the sun rose. And now Dream was here, unannounced while Tommy was alone and defenceless. How convenient was it that Dream showed up on the one day Techno left? Did Techno tell him his hiding spot as well? Was Dream going to rip open the lid at any second and pull him out?

Tommy still can't open his eyes, but he feels the tears running down his cheeks, a horrible twisting feeling in his gut.

Is this what betrayal felt like? He had been betrayed a few times, and he distantly remembers it hurting this much. It's a physical pain twisting inside of him, a horribly resigned ache that never seems to go away.

Somehow he isn't surprised. He really wishes he was surprised. He really wished he could have pretended to play the happy family a bit longer.

He needs to stop expecting people to care for him. He needs to stop putting his well-being in others hands because they seemed inclined to crushing it in their palms and smearing him in the dirt.

He shifts slightly, his breathing still laboured but somehow less frantic, evened out by the rushing feeling of anger welling up inside of him. Anger at himself for believing that maybe Techno did care about him. Anger at Phil for leaving him to the wolves once again. Anger at Techno for not just telling him to get the fuck out of his house and instead selling him out to Dream.

He can feel the vibrating steps coming closer. They're loud, like the person was purposefully stomping in heavy gear. Did Techno tell Dream about his hearing too? Tell him that he needed to stomp around just for Tommy to be able to know he was there? Any second now Dream would rip open the lid and grab him, and Tommy can do nothing but lie there and shake, head tucked into his knee and teeth biting hard into his hand to muffle any noises. He can taste blood on his tongue, feel it running down his hand. He doesn't ease off.

Dream was standing in front of the box, the footsteps stopping what he estimated to be a few feet in front of him. Where was Ghostbur? Was he okay? Could Dream even hurt the ghost? He really hoped not. Ghostbur was just caught in the crossfire. Tommy doesn't think he'd be able to live with himself if he managed to get Ghostbur hurt.

His eyes are closed but he can see the flicker of flames in his vision, can see Dream's smiling face surrounded by the ruined remains of his home. He can practically feel the heat licking at his skin and the pieces of shrapnel lodging into his skin and digging in there, even if he knows there's nothing there.

He's terrifying, resigned to knowing that any second Dream would be grabbing him and taking him wherever he wanted to. Doing whatever he wanted to him.

Despite it all, he wants Techno. He wants his brother to come in and kick Dream out and hold him until he stopped shaking, making those soft humming noises he always did when Tommy was upset. He wanted his brother here and it hurt because he knew that there was a reason he was not.

He isn't sure how long he was lying there, shaking and waiting for Dream to grab him, but he thinks it's been a while. The panic hasn't eased off of him, choking him as he lay there as silent as he could be, but everything's twisted and distorted as his body reminds him of things

that aren't even happening. He rocks himself slightly back and forth, pretending the movement was soothing as his other hand comes up to tug at his hair.

There are hands on him. Hands grabbing and pulling and trying to get him out of the box and his brain short circuits, going blank with panic as they gripped onto him. Tommy flails, screaming and kicking as hard as he could, squeezing his eyes shut even further.

He doesn't want to look at Dream's smiling face. He can't bring himself to look into Dream's eyes. He can practically feel the sting of a slap across his face, can feel the burn of flint and steel igniting. Dream was going to burn the house down with him inside and all he can do is sit there with his eyes closed screaming bloody murder.

No matter how much he flails, his arms and legs never come into contact with anything, the hands slipping on and off of him like they were fading in and out every couple of seconds. Tommy can't open his eyes, even when the rational side of his brain whispers that this isn't Dream touching him. That it was Ghostbur instead.

He wants to stay inside that fantasy. He doesn't want to open his eyes and realize that he wasn't safe anymore, that he hadn't been safe for a very long time. He wants to stay in this dream world where it was Ghostbur's hands on his face, tapping his cheeks and trying to pry at his eyelids with cold unfeeling fingers. He likes this fantasy. He doesn't want to see Dream.

He falls out of the box, twisting and screaming and he can feel his throat going raw with the sudden abuse, and he's sobbing at this point, fighting and he feels words falling out of his mouth that his addled brain isn't even able to properly make sense of.

He's being gathered into someone's arms, and he's wrapped in an almost comforting cold. A touch that feels like dust particles float over his skin in soothing circular motions. He can feel something being shoved into his hands, smooth and almost chalky. His sobs are tapering off, the effort it's taking to sustain it almost too much. The panic is there, still paralyzing him, but the longer Dream goes without hurting him makes the hysteria fade a bit.

He doesn't want to come back down to reality, but he needs to, so he squints his eyes open, whimpering at the bright lights hitting his aching eyes. He looks down first, staring at the blue dye staining his hands, smeared over his skin.

He looks up and meets Ghostbur's eyes. His brother is crying thick blue tears, panic clear on his face even as he tried to smile down at him, his lips moving as his hand carded through Tommy's hair. It wasn't Dream. It was Ghostbur. A quick look around shows them to be alone in the room. Tommy's safe.

But he isn't, not really. Because just because Dream didn't take him this time, didn't mean that he was safe. Because Techno had to have told Dream where to find him, when to show up. Dream was playing with him, like he always was, and he'd be back eventually to properly take him away.

Tommy isn't safe because Techno ratted him out and Tommy should have seen it coming. He knew this day would come, when Tommy became too much of a handful, when his issues

became just too much for Techno to deal with. He knew Techno would get rid of him; he had just hoped for maybe a bit longer.

He needs to leave, but his eyes felt so heavy and Ghostbur's hand in his hair was so calming. If he closed his eyes he could pretend it was Wilbur, comforting him after his latest batch of nightmares like he always did. He could pretend that his brother still loved him unconditionally before he died, and that this version of his brother was capable of remembering him enough to care.

Everything crashed around him and he went limp in Ghostbur's arms, letting out a soft whine as he curled up tighter, trying to appreciate the feeling of comfort one last time. He feels something nudge his hand, a wet nose shoving itself against him. He unclenches his stiff fingers, hissing slightly as he flexed his injured hand, fresh blood spilling out over the blue.

The sheep nudged at him, rubbing its head over his hand before curling up on the floor beside them, its wool heavy against Tommy's chest. Ghostbur was still running his fingers through his hair, and Tommy lets himself get lured into the false sense of security.

He'd just rest for a moment. A single moment was all he needed to get his head back on right. Then he'd figure out what to do.

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Tommy woke up alone. Or at least mostly alone. The stupid sheep was still pressed against him, Tommy's head buried in the soft blue fur. Tommy blinked; his mind fuzzy as he looked around. The sun was starting to set outside, and Ghostbur was nowhere to be found. Embarrassingly he takes a moment to try and listen for the movement, before shaking himself out.

He recalls what had happened earlier and can't stop the blinding fear that raced through him, anger sparking a physical ache deep inside his chest, a pressure pumping through his blood. But he keeps quiet, taking a deep breathe to center himself. Ghostbur was gone and he wouldn't get another chance like this. He does his best to be quiet as he dislodged himself from the sheep, holding up a finger to his mouth when the sheep opens its mouth in what Tommy assumed was an annoyed baa at being moved.

He sways dangerously once he's on his feet, everything shaking with the simultaneous adrenaline crash and rush. His head is spinning, he's horribly lightheaded and he wants to collapse and go to sleep and never wake up, but he has to leave. He isn't safe here, hasn't been for a while.

Nowhere is safe. There's no place for him to go, to run to. Not anymore. He just knows that he needs to get out of here, can't lie waiting for Dream to come back. Or to see the disappointment on Techno's face when he gets back and sees Tommy still there.

He's so tired of running. Of constantly having to fight just for a place to stay, to be safe. He's thought he's had it so many times only for the security to be ripped out from under him. How stupid was he to believe that this time would have been different? He should know better than



that by now. He should know better than to believe that there was a place for him in this cabin.

Tommy walks to the chests in the corner of the room, opening them and rooting through the supplies, hoping he wasn't making that much noise. He feels oddly calm, like he's on autopilot, the fear suddenly feeling every far away. Everything feels very far away, even the anger, which is a first for him.

Packing is easy. He always had a list in his mind of things he needed, he had catalogued everything's position on his second day here. Enough food for a few days trip, a couple spare potions, some old tools Techno had left lying out. He knew exactly where everything he needed was, shoving it into his bag before stumbling to the door.

He carefully straps on his armour, hands shaking so badly that it takes him nearly two minutes just to pull the straps up properly. It's frustrating, and he needs to stop himself from picking everything up and smashing it onto the ground more than once. But Ghostbur hadn't noticed anything yet and Tommy didn't want to deal with him begging him to stay. If he even would. Ghostbur might just wave him off with a smile.

He paused, hands reaching up to grab at the cape still wrapped around his shoulders. He should leave it behind. For some reason he can't bring himself to take it off.

He opens the door and steps outside, quietly clicking it shut before he turns, eyes scanning for Dream. He had no idea where he was, or how long he had been gone for. Tommy isn't sure how long he was asleep. It doesn't really matter either way.

Tommy steps into the snow and he runs into the dark.

## Chapter End Notes

Aha, Tommy's having such a good time. But in good news, this is actually the last time we see Dream for a while so that's a good thing!! Also, I find it entertaining that Dream was probably doing his whole evil monologue the entire time, and the only two people there to listen are either completely deaf, or will forget it in a couple of hours. All that monologuing for nothing.

Also! I probably will have a general chapter count up soon!! I've completely replotted a bit of this story for pretty much no reason, but I should be able to tell you guys how much is left eventually. There's still plenty left to come though, we're almost at a tipping point, I promise there will be lots more comfort to come after this chapter!!

# God, I wish that you had thought this through

## Chapter Summary

Techno goes for a walk. It isn't a very nice one.

## Chapter Notes

I don't think I've ever written a chapter this fast but I had tons of inspiration and a ton of sugar and wrote it pretty much in three hours at four am lol. It's not as coherent as I would have liked but I like it enough to post anyways lol. Hope you guys like it!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Techno arrived back at his house halfway through the night, his dog by his side and a puppy snuggled into his cloak. His chest is warm, and he isn't sure it wasn't just from the lingering heat of the nether.

He doesn't really know what to think about Niki yet, but he has high hopes. He recognizes the anger in her eyes, the sting of betrayal, at being pushed aside and ignored by those you thought would listen to you. He isn't quite sure he can relate, he was always the center of attention, the biggest threat, the number one on their hit lists, but he had seen it too many times to miss.

He remembers it in Wilbur's eyes every time Phil and him left for their travels again. Saw it in the insanity that clouded them near the end. He saw it in Tommy's eyes while he sat in exile, could see it in every movement the young boy made.

He couldn't help Wilbur until it was too late and he was dead. He couldn't help Tommy until it was too late and he was deaf and traumatized. Maybe he could help Niki, give her a place to heal, an outlet that didn't end with a spiral of violence and pain. Maybe she could help him.

Techno had never been much of a fixer. He had never been the hero, the saviour. He knew his ideals and he held them tightly to his chest and did anything to achieve them. Most of the time that meant stepping into the role of the villain. He didn't mind as much as he should, as long as he got the job done.

He tore things down, deconstructed them and walked away from the ashes, hoping that someone would come and build them up to be something better, to be something good. And if

they didn't? Well, there was plenty of time to ruin it again until they got it right. It wasn't pretty, and it wasn't right, but it worked. And that's what mattered.

He learned his lessons when he was younger, lessons taught through bloodshed and pain. He learned that not everyone was going to like you, and that sometimes it was easier to have that hate guaranteed as long as you got what you wanted. There was a time and a place for softness, for weakness, and none of it was on the battlefield.

That doesn't mean he likes it. He wanted peace, he wants to settle down and be able to stop the killing, maybe to settle down with his younger brother and make sure he's okay. God only knows that the two of them deserve it. Deserve a safe place to grow old in, a place where neither of them ever have to worry about war or oppression ever again.

He would do everything in his power to help Tommy get that. For his younger brother and for himself. And maybe he could give that opportunity to Niki as well. The life of a hero always ended in pain, but the life of a villain wasn't that grand either.

And it would be nice to learn sign, just as a general thing. Tommy seemed to much prefer it when it came to communicating. Techno could tell he was getting frustrated with the communication issues, and he knew it wouldn't be long before Tommy snapped again and Techno really couldn't deal with another dented bowl.

He had been trying to read up, but most of the information they gave was the basics of sign and nothing more. Most of them just lectured him on how important emoting and facial expressions were to the whole thing. How emotions and how you showed them was the key to communication.

Techno wasn't good with emotions. Mostly just in general, but especially in the art of showing them. He learned many years ago that showing pain or fear while in a battle was the difference between making it out alive or dead. People used every emotion against you, twisted it and sharpened it until it was a blade that cut.

Techno himself had learned those tells, had been schooled in the art of seeing even the smallest changes in someone's stance or facial expression and realizing what he could do to use that against them. A grimace in pain when leaning on something became a flashing neon sign of where to hit, a flash of panic when another soldier got too close to a sword became a target.

Techno learned to stop showing those emotions when he was seventeen and kidnapped for the first time to be used as leverage against Phil. He hadn't even been involved with Phil at the time, instead making a name for himself in Hypixel. He had shown too much pride when hearing about Phil's recent victories, and Phil had shown too much pride when hearing of his. Phil's enemies looking for revenge knew exactly where to go.

Techno was trapped there for a week. Phil had killed them all, unlocking the chains with blood-soaked fingers. Techno came out with a dead face and the first thing he did was himself a boar mask to hide not only his emotions but the scars now littering his skin.

Tommy had thought it was cool when Techno went home to properly recover for a few weeks. He hadn't understood why Techno refused to take it off. He was too young and naïve to properly understand what had happened. Wilbur just stared at him with sad eyes. Techno never really figured out what he was so sad about. It wasn't like they had been close in years.

Either way, the boar mask had been a constant since then. As a result he had lost the skill of being able to emote with his face past tiny little micro-expressions. At first it was because it hurt too much to move his face. Then it had just become a habit. There was no need to emote when those emotions were hidden either way. When they could get him hurt.

He had learned that expressions, emotions, feelings- they were a cause for blackmail, they gave the enemy an upper hand, a reason to hurt you. And now? Now it was the only way he could properly communicate with his little brother. He thinks there might be something ironic about that, but Techno had long since stopped trying to find the irony in his life.

He makes good time in the nether, quite proud about his travel time and getting home as soon as he did. He was in a good mood as he walked towards his cabin, hyping himself up for the conversation he was about to have. He couldn't wait to see the look on Tommy's face when he shoves the puppy into his arms. For the first time in forever Techno had a good feeling about things.

Of course, like most things, he's proved almost instantly wrong, since apparently things have a habit of going to shit the second he leaves. He walks through the door, his dog at his feet shaking off the snow in her fur, to find a distraught Ghostbur waiting by the door.

"Tommy!" He practically screamed, thick blue tears starting to seep down his cheeks. Techno startled, putting down the puppy and letting out a small sigh of relief when his dog grabbed the smaller animal and got out of the way.

"What?" Techno asked, Ghostbur stumbling over to him, hands waving in the air like he was trying to smack at a gnat. "What about Tommy?"

"Oh Techno it's so foggy," Ghostbur had never sounded this distressed. He was crying and nearly out of his mind in his panic and Techno got a terrible feeling in his chest. "Techno I'm trying very hard to keep hold of it but it keeps slipping away. It's all slipping away."

"You're doing great Ghostbur," Techno said, trying to soothe his panicking brother, eyes darting around to try and see if anything was wrong. Nothing immediately jumped out. He resisted the urge to storm downstairs to see where Tommy was. "Just tell me what happened quickly before you lose it again."

"It was Dream," Ghostbur sobbed as Techno's blood ran cold. "He was here Techno; Tommy was so panicked and I didn't understand because I thought Dream was our friend but Tommy was hiding and Dream was here and then he was gone and Tommy was panicking I think I'm not sure Techno it's sliding away I don't know--"

"Is he okay?" Techno asked, voice firm. Ghostbur is staring at him with wide eyes and Techno finds himself almost saddened at how far his brother had fallen. But that wasn't important right now. What was important was making sure that Tommy was okay, that Dream

hadn't hurt him. Shit, of course the first time he leaves something like this happens. This was horrible timing. "Ghostbur, I need you to focus and tell me if Dream found out about Tommy."

Ghostbur frowns, his form flickering in and out as he stands there, eyebrows pinched as if it hurt to remember. Maybe it did.

"I don't- Techno it's so foggy I don't want to remember, but I- I think I messed up? I tried very hard to remember that I wasn't supposed to tell him, but I think I let it slip that Tommy made the tower?" Ghostbur sounds so pathetic and Techno grits his teeth. So Dream knew. He wasn't overly surprised. Techno suspects that maybe he knew the first time too. It doesn't matter either way, Techno could figure that out later. "I don't- Techno wasn't Dream nice? Wasn't he our friend?"

"It's fine Ghostbur, you can just relax, everything going to be okay," He reassures him lowly, hand reaching out and patting his shoulder. He tries to comfort his ghostly brother, but it looks like he only made it worse, because Ghostbur's face only falls further.

"You're doing that thing everyone does," His voice is shaking. "When they treat me like a child. I'm not a child Technoblade. I know something went wrong, even if I can't remember quite what. Don't do that. I don't like that."

"I'm sorry," Techno said awkwardly, swallowing hard. He didn't have enough time for this. "Is Tommy okay? Where is he?"

"Tommy," Ghostbur repeated, eyes squeezing shut again. "He passed out I think, he needed help but he wouldn't open his eyes no matter how many times I called his name. He kept begging me not to hurt him, but I'd never hurt him Techno. He's my friend, I love him right? I would never hurt him would I?"

"Of course not Ghostbur," Techno said, trying not to get frustrated. "What else happened?"

"I went to get him some hot chocolate, he loves hot chocolate Technoblade, always has. But he was gone when I got back, I think he ran. I don't- I tried to follow him but it was dark and snowing and it hurt and I knew I couldn't let things slip like they would if I ran out to get him and he was already gone and I knew you would be back soon. You have to find him, its dark. He hates the dark, he hates-"

Ghostbur trailed off again and Techno thinks his heart had stopped inside his chest. Tommy was gone. No, that couldn't have happened. That couldn't be true. Ghostbur was remembering it wrong.

"Are you sure? Did you see where he went?" He turns to his brother, who was staring at the wall with absent eyes. He turned slowly, a blank smile on his face.

"Where he went Techno?" Ghostbur said, and Techno feels his heart sink. "When did you get back? You look sad, do you need some blue?"

“No, I'm okay Ghostbur,” The words feel like ash on his tongue as he stares at the empty hole that his brother used to be. “Go pet Friend okay?”

Ghostbur leaves without a complaint, and Techno races downstairs, because it can't be true. Tommy will be lying in his bed, curled up and sleeping peacefully, tired and traumatized but still here, still safe.

The bed was empty. All his other hiding spaces were as well.

Tommy was gone.

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Techno decided to keep his panic to a limited capacity of five minutes.

It took him five minutes to root through his chests, carefully taking note of every missing item. Supplies for travel. This wasn't Tommy panicking and running out to get some fresh air. There was intent here, this was preplanned. Tommy had thought about this, had planned it out and taken what supplies he needed the most. This wasn't spontaneous, Tommy had to have been planning this for a while.

For some reason, Techno feels oddly hurt.

But he doesn't think about that. He thinks about his stupid fucking deaf little brother stumbling around in the dark alone for what could have been the entire night. It was almost morning now, and Techno had no idea when he left, how long he had been gone. Tommy could be thousands of blocks away now if he had found a portal.

So Techno straps on his armour once again, having only half taken it off when he returned, and grabs enough supplies for a two-day trip, preparing to leave.

“Where are you going?” Ghostbur asked from where he was sitting in the corner, holding onto that stupid sheep.

“Out,” Techno said, not having time to deal with Ghostbur when Tommy could be dying at this moment. Shit why had Techno had to go and get attached? He should know better by now. He paused, looking over at his dog, who was staring at him with knowing eyes, the puppy curled into her side.

He walked over to her side, carefully leaning down and grabbing the little pup, who let out a soft whine when he pulls him away from the warmth. He walked over to Ghostbur, shoving the puppy into his arms. His brother stared at it with wide eyes, a grin on his face.

“Don't lose this one,” Techno grumbled, before turning and opening the door, his wolf by his side. He reached down to briefly run a hand through her coarse fur, the touch helping center him a bit. “Let's find him girl.”

They head into the forest. Techno can make out faint footprints leading in that direction, the same size as Tommy's new boots. They aren't distinct as he would have liked, but they gave him a direction. He lost them nearly a couple blocks in, but it's fine. There's enough broke

foliage around that Techno can guess that Tommy crashed through here, half-hysterical and afraid.

What part of Tommy thought this was a good idea? In what world was the outdoors safer than inside Techno's cabin? Even if Techno wasn't there he would show up eventually. Dream was much more likely to find him out here than behind closed doors.

Tommy had never been known for his well thought through plans. Techno should stop expecting that of him.

He searches for hours, every minute ticking by making the chat grow louder as the paranoid feeling in his chest expanded. Tommy could be anywhere, Tommy could be dead right now, Dream could have Tommy and Techno would have no way of getting him back. He had to avoid the urge to scream Tommy's name. He wouldn't hear him, and even if it would make Techno feel better, Dream might be out here as well and Techno didn't want to give him any sort of advantage. He just needed to find Tommy and fast.

***Where is he Lost innit Lost innit EE Lost innit Blood for the blood god Little bitch where is he I am going to beat this child myself EEE Techno soft blood for the blood god We are not murdering Tommy E Lost innit Stupid child Does he want to get kidnapped? Does he ever think these things though? E Lost innit Techno can pet your dog E Blood! Its cold out why did he do this Lost innit***

Chat was giving him a headache. When he got Tommy back he was going to give him a large lecture about activities that made Chat spam like that. Mostly on how to avoid them.

He searches for clues to where Tommy went, finding broken branches and half deep impressions of footprints littered around. It's nothing concrete, and honestly could be from any type of animal, but Techno can't give up hope in his tracking skills quite yet. The sun was in the sky now, and Techno really hopes that he didn't miss Tommy's body being covered by snow from where it was taken out by a mob he didn't see.

Techno looks up to the tree, remembering that sometimes Tommy liked to climb up them to avoid any big fights. He doesn't see anyone. He half hoped Tommy would jump out of the tree and land on his back. That seemed like something Tommy would do.

Fuck Techno hoped that idiot was okay. He wouldn't forgive him if he ended up dying out here. That would be a dick move.

Suddenly his dog started whining, and he looked down, watching as she pawed at the ground before tossing her head and taking off to the side.

"Where are you going?" He called out, taking off after her, nimbly jumping over branches and ducking under leaves to track his dog through the snow. She runs for a solid five minutes before stopping, turning and looking at him once again.

He's about to ask her what the hell that was for when he sees a familiar red cape tucked into the snow. Techno feels something snap inside of him as he rushed forwards, nearly screaming in relief as he dropped to his knees beside his brother who was tucked into the snow, head dipped as if he was asleep.

He better be fucking sleeping.

Techno grabs Tommy's shoulders, shaking him side to side, wiping off the snow from his shoulders. Tommy doesn't move, other than his face scrunching up and a soft whine rumbling in his chest. Techno looks him over for injuries. Potential hypothermia for sure, since the idiot was asleep in the snow, but there appeared to be no pressing injuries, other than the deep bite marks in his hand. It's too neat to be from a zombie, and Techno doesn't think about it past that fact.

There's blood on his clothes, dark red that almost looks black. Spider blood from the looks of it. Techno feels oddly proud of him for no reason. It's not like Tommy had never killed a mob before, and he can't be too proud since the idiot had started sleeping in the fucking snow right after.

"Wake up Tommy," Techno muttered, shaking him again. He presses a hand against Tommy's cheek, swiping at the tear tracks visible on his face. Something inside his chest twists as he imagines his brother scared and alone fighting through the woods. Two days ago Tommy could barely step outside without clinging to Techno's side. What had changed? What had scared Tommy so badly that he had run this far?

Tommy shifts, face scrunching up as he let out a soft groan, face nuzzling momentarily into Techno's hand. Reluctantly Techno pulled away, knowing that Tommy wouldn't be very happy to find him holding his face when he woke up.

His brothers' eyes finally blinked open, and a lot of things happened at once.

Techno had been expecting anger. He had been expecting panic. Maybe even a small part of him had been hoping for relief. But when Tommy opened his eyes, Techno had not been expecting the fear to flash so vividly through them.

He also wasn't expecting the fist flying into his face.

He managed to turn his head in time to mostly absorb the blow, but his cheek and nose still stung with the force of the hit, Tommy knew how to pack a punch and he knew where to hit to make it hurt. He should have remembered to grab his mask before leaving, but he was a bit too panicked at the time. His nose ached, not broken but definitely hurting like a little bitch.

Tommy was flying back, scrambling against the earth, kicking up snow and shoving a face full of it towards Techno, who batted the cold material away.

"You fucking *bastard!*" Tommy screamed at him, a flock of crows taking flight at the noise, their cawing almost relaxing in a Pavlov type of way. If only Techno wasn't panicking almost as much as Tommy currently was. "How could you? How fucking could you?"

"Tommy, you need to calm down," Techno raised his hands, eyes widening slightly as Tommy's chest heaved with panic, hands getting scraped up as he kept scrambling backwards, eyes wide with fear. Techno never wanted to see that look on his brother's face, especially not aimed towards him. Techno crept forwards, looking around to see where Tommy might go if he bolted. Tommy looked ready to bolt. Techno keeps talking despite



knowing that Tommy couldn't hear him. "It's okay, you're going to be okay kid. Just breathe for me."

"I hate you so much," Tommy screamed, voice breaking as tears overfilled his eyes and ran down his cheeks. Techno didn't understand. He was so horribly out of the loop it hurt. Was Tommy even seeing him? "Fuck, I trusted you. I *trusted* you!"

Tommy's picking up a handful of snow and sticks, hurling it at Techno, who easily dodged around it. Tommy was a good fighter, but not hysterical and not in comparison to him. The first hit was lucky.

"Why would you do that? Why couldn't you just tell me to leave? I don't want to go back to Dream- I don't- I *won't*-" Tommy's baring his teeth like a wild animal, eyes wide and panicking, darting around as if looking for a place to run. "Did you come to take me to him? His loyal lapdog? I hope it's worth it, I hope you rot in hell you fucking prick. I trusted you. I trusted you not to hurt me, why did you hurt me?"

Techno's getting closer, and his plan is half-baked and probably stupid but it's the only thing he can think of now. Tommy wouldn't- couldn't react to words. Anything Techno said would be useless since Tommy didn't appear to want to read his lips. It was a bad idea, and probably would only freak Tommy out more, but Techno knew the only way to get him safe was to grab him.

Techno was not a fixer. He was no a saviour. He knew what he wanted and he knew that sometimes he had to be the villain to get it.

So he lunged forwards, hands reaching out and grabbing Tommy even as he shrieked, horribly vivid fear coating his face. Tommy reared back but it was too late. Techno's hands wrapped around his shoulder and pulled him to his chest, even when Tommy starting screaming like Techno had stabbed him, like Techno was tearing him apart limb by limb. Tommy was flailing, hands scratching and hitting and finding their way in between the cracks of his armour to tear at skin.

Techno holds him firmly even as small blossoms of pain bloom over his skin, even if Tommy calls him a traitor, calls him a bastard and other accusations Techno simply doesn't understand. Techno doesn't know what happened. He doesn't know how Tommy got this bad, this hysterical. Two days ago Tommy was clinging to him like a newborn baby. And now here he was fighting like a rabid animal in his arms, scratching and clawing and begging to be let go.

"Please Techno," Tommy sobs, hands pathetically bouncing off his armour and Techno clutches him closer, eyes squeezed shut as he tucks Tommy's head under his own, his chin resting on Tommy's mop of hair. "Please Tech, leave me alone. Let me go. I don't want to go back. I can't go back to him; I can't go back to being hurt. Please Techno if you ever fucking cared about me you'd let me go. Let me disappear."

"Never," Techno whispers to a brother who would never hear him. He holds Tommy tighter even as he squirms, hoping to somehow convey the same sentiment. He lets out a low rumble

deep in his chest, the vibrations making Tommy go almost entirely still. “I’m not leaving you again kid. I promise you that.”

It’s easy to say when he knew that Tommy couldn’t hear him. When he’d never be able to judge him, to use this horrible vulnerability against him.

Because that’s what it was. Techno hadn’t intended to, but he was attached now. Seeing Tommy like this, hysterical and upset, tears running down his cheeks and panic and bone-deep sorrow that someone so young shouldn’t know shining in his eyes, it snapped something inside of him. It inspired something that he had buried deep inside him many years ago. Something he hadn’t felt since staring into Tommy’s face for the first time.

Techno had destroyed things. He had ruined so many lives and simply hadn’t cared. There was no place for care or concern on the battlefield. But maybe Techno was done treating life like a battle. Maybe it was time to properly retire. To be there for his family, for Tommy. Techno was so tired of only seeing pain, of only causing pain.

Maybe this time he wanted to build something, repair it even. Maybe he wanted to fix something without tearing it down first and leaving the reconstruction to others. Maybe he wanted to create something for once in his life. Maybe he could start with his brother.

And so he cradled his brother tightly in his arms as the fighting came to a stop, Tommy’s fingers clinging to his cape and holding onto it in tightly closed fists, sobs shaking his thin shoulder. Techno keeps up the low rumble in his chest, almost a purr in tone. It seems to calm Tommy somehow, the vibrations felt even through the armour on both their chests. Techno’s chin is still tucked into his hair and Techno lets his eyes fall closed just for a moment.

They would need to move soon. It wasn’t safe, especially with all the noise they made and Dream possibly nearby, but just for a moment Techno would drink in this moment. Let himself be wrapped around his brother, to hold Tommy’s safe and whole in his arms before addressing whatever the hell had just happened.

“Why did you do it?” Tommy sobs into his chest and Techno goes still. He wants to ask what Tommy’s on about, but he knows it not use. “I don’t understand. You told him where I was, didn’t you? When to come and grab me? That’s why you left. So that Dream could come and take me. And I don’t understand because he didn’t and now you’re here and you’re doing this and I can’t take it Techno. I can’t take this back and forth. This hurts so much more.”

Techno didn’t think today could get worse, but he guesses that Tommy had always been full of surprises.

He gently untangles himself from Tommy, ignoring the soft whine Tommy gave when he pulled away. Tommy refused to meet his eyes, jaw clenched as he stared at the ground, hands still clenching onto Techno’s cape. Techno gently tapped his cheek, waiting impatiently as Tommy took his time to look up, anger flashing through his eyes.

Good. Techno had always been able to deal with anger. Angry Tommy was a thousand times better than hysterically crying Tommy. Techno raises his hands, quickly signing familiar words that they both knew.

“No. I’m safe, you’re safe. I would never do that to you,” Techno carefully signed out, wishing that he could articulate his point better. But he needs Tommy to understand that he would never hand him over to Dream. Never in his wildest dreams. He had no idea how Dream knew that Techno was gone.

There’s a sinking feeling in his gut. Techno hadn’t thought of it before, but the chances of Dream watching them were high. He would have seen Tommy around, would have watched Techno leave his house earlier and known to make his move.

Techno wants to tear him apart piece by piece, favour be damned. Techno just wanted to be left alone, not pulled into every damn conflict on this server, not be hunted down like an animal. If Dream ever showed his face around Techno’s cabin again Techno would do a lot more than drive his fist into his stupid mask.

“I can’t believe you,” Tommy whispered, his voice so soft and shaky and Techno knew that if Tommy could hear himself he would be beyond upset. Maybe it’s a good thing he couldn’t. “Where were you Techno? You just left.”

“Oh,” Techno feels a bit sheepish, huffing out a soft laugh before turning and clicking his finger, his hound slinking over to their side from where she had been sitting out of the way. Tommy turned to look at her before turning back to Techno with a dumbfounded look on his face. “I got a dog.”

“You got a dog,” Tommy said after a moment of processing what Techno said. Techno just nodded, and Tommy turned to the wolf, who sat down and tilted her head to the side. Tommy wrinkled his nose. “What the fuck?”

“There’s one back at the cabin for you,” Techno said when Tommy turned to look at him again. Tommy just stared at him like he was stupid and Techno feels vaguely embarrassed. “You don’t have to like it, but at least a reaction would be nice. Some gratitude even. I had to talk to people to get these dogs for you.”

Tommy looked like he only caught about half of that, but just shook his head, running a shaking hand down his face, sniffing to himself again before letting out a sigh, shoulders slouching even more. He looked exhausted, his head turning to the dog. He holds out a hand, laughing as she headbutts his hand and licks at it gently.

“I’m calling her Susan,” Tommy mumbles, and Techno resists the urge to groan.

“Susan?” He finger spells out, hoping the disbelief is read in his slight twitch of an eyebrow. Tommy huffs, rolling his eyes.

“Susan is a world-class name. She should be honoured to have such a wonderful name. And I don’t think you’re really in a place to judge, *Technoblade*.”

It’s good to hear Tommy joking, even if his voice is weak and he’s still shivering just outside of Techno’s arms. Even if he looks half dead and ready to collapse, Techno will take whatever jabs and insults Tommy wants to throw his way with glee.

“Let’s go home,” Techno sighed, shaking his head. Tommy’s face flashes over his panic, but it’s gone within a second, shuddered over until there was no trace of emotion in Tommy’s face. Techno’s heart hurts. He knows that Tommy isn’t going to forgive him anytime soon, even if Techno hadn’t technically done anything.

Jesus this kids’ abandonment issues were world-class. They should probably make him see someone for that. He’d bring it up with Niki maybe, last he heard she was dating that therapist right?

He reaches out, hating the way Tommy flinched away from his hands, snarling as he smacked at Techno’s hand and shakily climbed to his feet on his own. Techno clenched his own fists, wanting to reach out just to reassure himself that Tommy was okay but knowing that the opportunity was gone. Their moment was over and Tommy was back to shying away from every touch.

They started the trek back in silence. Techno is sure Tommy was going to break it and start rambling, but it seems that Tommy was more used to the silence at this point. He was quiet by Techno’s side, moving through the snow slowly. Techno’s getting a bit more worried about the hypothermia with how hard Tommy’s shaking. They’re about five minutes out from the house when Tommy stopped, staring down at the ground. Techno turns, waiting for him to either say something or start moving again, ready to reach out if Tommy passed out.

“Tell me Dream won’t be there when I get back,” Tommy whispered, looking up with eyes too scared for Techno to connect to the same boy who fought through wars and lived through multiple near death accidents. “Even if it’s a lie, just tell me he won’t be there.”

“He won’t be,” Techno said back, hoping that Tommy could see the truth in his eyes. Tommy doesn’t even bother looking up at him, reading his lips before nodding, going back to staring at the ground. They continue moving forwards.

The rest of the walk back is silent.

Ghostbur hadn’t moved from where he was sitting when they got back, still cradling the puppy like it was the most precious thing in the world. He almost drops it on his head when he sees Tommy, shooting to his feet.

Tommy didn’t really seem in the mood, walking right past Ghostbur to sit on the couch, curling up with his arms wrapped around his legs. He looked half asleep, eyes darting around nervously. Techno’s just glad to have him in the house. If he locks the door more securely behind him, well Tommy doesn’t need to know.

“Techno?” Ghostbur asked, sounding half confused half worried. His hands are stained blue. Techno rubbed at this head, where a headache was starting to build up. He could only deal with one mentally unstable sibling at a time.

“Everything’s fine Ghostbur, could you go make Tommy that hot chocolate you were talking about earlier?” He asked, distantly amused when Ghostbur perked up, a blinding grin on his face.

“Of course I can!” He said, practically running off, tugging that stupid sheep after him. Techno watched him go before reaching over and grabbing a piece of paper, scribbling on a note before ripping the page out and grabbing the little puppy, cooing slightly at the way it stretched and opened its little eyes again. He walked over to Tommy, sitting down on the opposite side of the couch and putting both the puppy and the note in his arms.

*Here's the little guy. I was thinking we can train him to be a service dog for you, alert you to any noises or when people call your name. It could help you a bit. Might take a while though, we can learn how to train him together. He's small, but with some extra food he'll be plenty healthy. What do you think?*

Tommy read the note before turning to the dog, lifting it up to his face. The puppy hung there awkwardly in the air, trying to lean forwards to lick at Tommy's face. The boy snorted, bringing the puppy to his chest, burying his head in its soft fur, shoulders slouching. Techno grinned slightly to himself. Jackpot. When all else fails, Tommy's love of animals will always prevail.

“Johnathan,” Tommy said, voice muffled in the fur. “I'm naming him Johnathan. A distinguished name for a distinguished gentleman.”

Tommy should not be allowed to name anything ever. Techno isn't too surprised, since he was one of the main creator and enabler of names like 'L'manburg' and 'Pogtopia', but still. Susan and Johnathan? What were they, a fifty-year-old couple?

He only shakes his head, knowing better than to question Tommy. It was his dog after all. And neither dog seemed to complain about their new names. And Techno's not soft, but he doesn't feel like arguing about something that seemed to make Tommy happy. Chat disagrees, becoming a spam of the word 'Technosoft' that immediately makes his headache worse. It wasn't even noon yet.

Ghostbur comes back in with the hot chocolate and Tommy uncurls from around the dog, grabbing it with a mumbled thanks as he sat there, one hand wrapped around the mug and the other carding through Johnathan's fur.

They don't say anything. Techno doesn't know what to say, how to address everything that had happened. He knows he should, and he knows one day he will have to. But not tonight, not when everything was still so fragile, not when Tommy looked one strong blow away from shattering. Not when Techno himself feels so exhausted, knocked off balance with no idea how to deal with something like this.

He didn't create. He didn't repair. His hands had only even known violence and destruction. It was the only guaranteed way of getting his point across.

But for Tommy he'd try. For the boy who sat with a puppy in his lap with such a soft look on his face. For the boy who laughed obnoxiously and never failed to brighten and liven up the room he was in. For the boy who clung to Techno even when hurt and scared. Who screamed how much he hated him while also holding onto him for dear life.

For Tommy- for his brother, Techno would try his best.

## Chapter End Notes

I'd say we have around two-threeish chapters left of this angst before we properly get to the point where we can properly start to heal! Also, kudos to Techno for once again thinking he's going to start doing better!! Let's see if he actually follows through this time! And if Tommy's willing to do the same!!!

Shameless self-promotion lol, I just posted a new story I'm super proud of if you want to go check it out :) It's an sbi story with a selkie Tommy with Wilbur, Techno, and Phil as lighthouse keepers who are just trying to deal with this strange kid who keeps showing up and a strangely intelligent seal, because I recently remembered how much I love writing selkie stories lol. So if you like my writing, like selkies and found family tropes, or if you're just super bored and want something to read, consider taking a look!! Hope you're all having a wonderful day/night!!

# 'Cause everybody comes and falls asleep

## Chapter Summary

Tommy tries to learn how to communicate. And make bread. Only one is successful. Sorta.

## Chapter Notes

Another chapter!! Not as much plot in this one, but we have a tiny bit more communication going on and some nice soft family moments :) Some could say the calm before the storm :) But not me :) Definitely not me :)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Tommy sat silently as Techno carefully washed out the cut on his hand, peeling back the dried blood and running soothing warm water over the aggravated wound. Tommy tried his best not to flinch, even when Techno swiped a bit too hard over the sensitive skin.

It hurt like a little bitch, but he was more than used to things like this. He didn't really have the right to cry over a wound that he gave himself, and he couldn't even feel bad for it when it was the difference between surviving and getting taken back to Dream.

Dream who was his friend. Dream who hurt him. Dream who wasn't working with Techno?

Tommy didn't know what to think. His brain was screaming at him, two sides of the story clashing inside of him.

This was what he hated the most about Techno. What he despised the most about staying here and trying to interact with his brother. He just simply made no sense. He said one thing and then acted in the complete opposite, he never reacted the way Tommy thought he would, and kept on being so fucking kind to him even though Tommy knew he had done nothing to earn it.

Techno left the house the day Dream showed up, after not having told Tommy anything that the two had said to each other during his previous visit. Tommy had been getting on Techno's nerves and Techno owed Dream something, some sort of favour to help him get out of something L'Manburg planned. Tommy didn't quite remember but that didn't matter much right now. It all pointed towards them working together, and it made sense. It sucked but that was the logical procedure to all things. Facts didn't care if they hurt or not.

But then Techno found him out in the woods after Tommy had spent the day fighting off mobs he had barely been able to detect in the low light, had found him after he had collapsed and curled into the snow, shivering and too tired to properly think of what could have happened to him. Techno had found him and held him tight even when Tommy hit him and clawed at his skin. Techno had made that rumbling noise with his chest that made Tommy feel warm and safe even if his mind screamed otherwise.

When they went home Techno promised that Dream wasn't there and he hadn't even lied. Dream wasn't hiding in the corners, waiting to jump out at him. Instead there was a wolf and a puppy. A very fluffy puppy that was currently curled in Tommy's lap, lured to sleep by Tommy's fingers softly gliding through its fur.

Everything screamed that Tommy was safe, and yet he didn't feel like it. He didn't understand Techno, he didn't understand what his brother was doing, why he was even helping. Tommy didn't need help, Tommy could survive on his own but Techno was still here, patient and almost understanding. Two things Tommy would have never attributed to his brother before now.

He just didn't get it. Nothing made sense and everything hurt and he just wanted to sleep and never wake up. He just wanted to be back in time with Wilbur, when things made sense and he didn't have to worry about living to the next day. He wants his best friend back.

Sometimes he wishes he had never even come to this stupid server. Sometimes he wished he just jumped into the lava.

Johnathan shifts and Tommy paused his rhythmic movement to pull the puppy closer to him, the little animal stretching and shifting to become more comfortable in his lap. Tommy smiled down at the animal, his other hand dropping from Techno's grip, finally all wrapped up. He looks up at Techno, who was staring at him with heavy eyes that Tommy couldn't figure out. Another thing Tommy couldn't understand was the layer of sadness and guilt that coated Techno's eyes everytime he looked at him.

"You good big man?" He asks, hating the way he can feel his voice cracking. Its bad, he can tell by the way Techno's frown deepens. He must be getting a headache from it or something. Tommy curls in his shoulders a bit deeper, but is kept from spiralling from Techno starting to sign.

"Hurt anywhere else?" He asks, and Tommy just shakes his head, not keen on using his voice again and feeling much too tired to sign. He just wants to sleep. Techno stood up, a hand reaching up to gently pat Tommy's shoulder. He tried not to flinch.

Techno starts towards the kitchen. Tommy figures that's the extent of their conversation, and that he can now go downstairs and hide in his room until he feel like being human again, but Techno suddenly paused, Tommy can see his hands clench as his head hangs low. He turns around to face him again.

"I think we need to talk," He signed slowly, his words clunky and a bit hard to understand but Tommy gets the gist of it. He doesn't want to talk, like ever. Not even physically. He's content keeping silent for the rest of his life.



“No,” He signs simply, shifting Johnathan off of him so that he can stand up, ready to go downstairs and sleep until he could forget this.

He’s stopped by Techno’s hand on his shoulder, not hard enough to hurt but squeezing just enough to be a warning and Tommy hates the fireworks it sends spiralling through his skin, the instinctual panic that grabs a hold of him. Techno walks them backwards, Tommy’s panic making him easy to wrangle back onto the couch.

“Sit,” Techno signs firmly when Tommy whines, trying to get up again. “We’re talking.”

“I don’t wanna,” He grumbled, his throat protesting again. He should really sign, but there wouldn’t be much point. Techno was better at signing than understanding it. “Shit happens. Shit happened. Let’s forget about it.”

“I’m not working with Dream,” Techno signed bluntly and Tommy flinched back at the sudden change in pace, his heart rate spiking slightly at just the mention of the other man. He raised his legs to his chest, curling into them. Johnathan nudged his head against his hip, but Tommy ignored him.

“You already told me that,” Tommy said evenly, or at least that’s how he hopes he sounds. Techno shook his head, sitting on the chair opposite to him.

“You don’t believe me,” He signs, and Tommy shrugs, looking down. Seconds later he feels something hit his side and looks up, seeing a crumpled piece of paper beside him. He levels Techno a glare, the pig prick looking much too proud of himself. “I would never work for him.”

“You owe him a favor,” Tommy pointed out softly. “And really it benefits you to hand me over. I don’t know why you haven’t yet. I know I’m a bit of a handful and not many people can handle big man Tommy.”

“You’re my brother,” Techno signs, and Tommy feels his heart leap into his throat. He hadn’t taught Techno that word. He almost did one night, his fingers halfway through signing it before he stopped, his chest tugging painfully. Sometimes the thought of physically confirming their brotherhood hurt.

“We haven’t been brothers in a very long time,” Tommy whispered, hating the way Techno’s lips twitched sadly at that. “And that has never stopped you before.”

Techno’s still for a long moment, and Tommy takes to picking at string on his cape. The fabric feels dirty under his fingers. He should probably wash it soon.

Another piece of paper bounces off his head, Tommy letting out a low growl of annoyance. He looks up to Techno, who immediately starts signing.

“Doesn’t matter. I’m not handing you over. I’m not lying about that. You’re safe here,” Tommy wants to believe it. He wants nothing else than to be safe, to be with someone who won’t bullshit him anymore. Techno hasn’t really lied yet, or at least nothing that Tommy could prove.

Was he safe here? Would he ever be safe with Dream hanging around? Did it even matter? Safety felt like a foreign concept at this point, something fantastical. He hasn't felt safe in years.

He really wants to feel safe, but it feels like a far-off thing. Unobtainable. A thing to think about and wish for but never have. Just like having a million girlfriends. Or a lot of drugs.

"Will you leave again?" Tommy whispered, fingers tugging violently at the cape. There's a coil of anxiety settling in his gut. He hates this vulnerability but he has to ask, has to make sure. "Because I can take care of myself, that's not an issue, it's just that you weren't here and he was and Ghostbur isn't really good at the whole lying thing. And I can't really hear you know, so I don't- I can't-" He cuts himself off, chest vibrating with a frustrated groan. "Will you be here next time? Are you going to leave me again?"

Techno hesitates, hands lifted half into the air as he stares at Tommy with a conflicted face. The face of a man who was going to leave again soon. Tommy saw that look plenty growing up.

"You are," He whispered, curling into himself. He feels so stupid for hoping otherwise. He can't expect Techno to stay by his side every day of his life. That was selfish of him. Being selfish is what got him into this mess in the first place. Him and his selfish needs drove a wedge between Tubbo and him, it pissed Dream off. And now he was driving Techno away too. "You are leaving. Of course you are, I don't know why I thought otherwise."

There's a piece of paper being shoved into his hands and he startled, flinching hard when he looked up to see Techno kneeling in front of him, hands raised slightly. He hadn't even seen him move. Susan was standing from her corner of the room, walking forwards and jumping onto the couch, pressing into Tommy's side. It was an oddly grounding feeling.

He stares down at the paper, blinking rapidly because he feels the pathetic need to cry for some reason. It's ridiculous. He's big man Tommy he didn't need anyone to stay with him. He didn't need anything.

*I have an arrangement I can't get out of. Niki offered to teach me sign language and I agreed. That's the only place I will ever be going. I don't want to leave you alone again but taking you to L'Manburg is a bad idea and she probably doesn't trust me enough to come out here yet. I've messaged Phil, he should be back soon. He promised to try and stay this time too.*

Techno was getting sign language lessons. From Niki of all people. Tommy missed Niki. He missed her baking and the smell of her bakery, her soft words of encouragement and her bright smile. Last time he saw her she was staring at him with angry eyes as he sat in the courthouse. She hadn't visited during exile, hadn't even sent a letter.

He doesn't know what to think about Niki. He wants to trust her, wants to think of her only as the big sister figure he saw before exile, but everything was so messed up. So many people hated him that it was easier to just assume she was on that list as well.

"Does she know about my hearing?" He asked, looking up his brother who froze in what almost looked like guilt. There's his answer then. "Techno, what the fuck? I thought we

agreed to keep this between us. I didn't want anyone knowing."

Did she think him weak? Pathetic? Would she try to plot and kill him now that he was defenceless enough that it might just work? What if she told others? What if she told Tubbo? Or Dream? No one was supposed to know, he doesn't even really want Techno to know about it.

Techno was lifting a hand, reaching out to touch them but Tommy's way to keyed up now, flinching away from the touch and scrambling to his feet. Susan follows him, pressing against his legs. He feels like crying again.

"I mean thanks for finally seeming to make an effort to learning sign, but she can't know. Everyone probably knows now, Dream is probably on his way here right now to take me away, you're supposed to be the smart one here!" He's being hysterical and unreasonable, but he doesn't care.

He wants to chose who to tell. He wants to be able to share this part of him with them whenever he feels ready, not whenever Techno deems it important to him.

"Sorry," Techno's signing over and over again, and Tommy's throat is starting to ache from all the talking he's been doing after screaming bloody murder twice in the span of a day. He wants some warm tea. He wants a hug. He wants to sleep. He wants to scream until his throat gives out. "It's okay, she won't tell anyone."

"You don't know that," Tommy grit his teeth, anger flaring and he falls back onto it because it was better than feeling the panic starting to overtake him. No one was supposed to know. Maybe he was holding onto the foolish idea that maybe he could fix it. That no one would ever need to know because he'd be whole again and it wouldn't be a problem. "You can't know that. You might've fucked everything up Techno. Dream's been here twice, are you encouraging another visit from him? Is that what you want? Fucking hell man."

"Calm down--"

"Don't tell me to calm down!" He screamed, his throat aching and tears pricking his eyes. "I'm fucking exhausted. I'm pissed off and tired and all I want is to go and sleep but you're insisting on making me sit here and talk to you when all you're doing is telling me that you're going blabbing my secrets to anyone who's going to listen to you! What the hell?"

Techno's reaching out again but Tommy's ducking away. He doesn't want to be touched. He doesn't think he'll stand being touched. He wants to fly off the handle and punch and scream until someone fucking hears and listens to him. Until he could hear himself again.

He wants to break something, to express how fucked up everything was, the stress and panic of the last few days building up inside of him. It just wasn't fair, none of it was fair and he wanted to scream and break something and shatter into a million pieces.

He wanted to claw at Techno until he bled. Until he stopped being so damn confusing. Until he stopped being so patient and yelled at him, lashed out and beat him half to death the way

he had before. He wants to walk into the pit and feel the raining hits on his skin because at least then he felt alive.

Techno suddenly jumped from where he stood, head snapping towards the door and Susan darted to her feet, lips pulled back into a snarl. Tommy turned, blinking as he took in the wide-open door behind him, Phil standing in the doorway panting, soaked to the bone. When had it started snowing?

Techno was moving forwards, shooting Tommy an unreadable look as he walked to their father, lips moving too fast for Tommy to understand.

The anger drained out of him almost as quickly as it appeared, and Tommy just wanted to sleep. He shoved the anger and the hurt deep inside of himself, smothering it with the illusion of peace, with the pull of exhaustion.

Phil was heading towards him, hands reaching out and they barely had time to cup his cheeks before Tommy was flinching away. He was too tired to hiss out any angry words, but Phil seemed to get the memo, hands dropping and a sad look on his face that appeared anytime he flinched away from one of their touches. It didn't make any sense; they should expect it by now.

"Are you (sue? do?) ok?" Phil asked, and Tommy imagined that his voice was gentle, soft. It didn't mean anything. If he wanted to be concerned he should have been here in the first place.

"Peachy," Tommy muttered, throat catching painfully. He swallowed hard. "Tired. Going to bed."

Techno was reaching out again, his lips forming Tommy's name but he couldn't hear it and Tommy was so tired of not hearing when he needed to. So he just turned around and went downstairs, his arms shaking with exhaustion as he lowered himself to his room.

What was Techno even expecting from him? For him to just spill all his inner feelings? Why does he even bother asking? It wasn't like he actually cared about what Tommy was thinking, what he was feeling. Techno had never cared before, and Tommy was struggling to believe that he did now. Either way, Tommy was fine. He could deal with this himself. He just needed a little more time to get back on his feet then he'd stop having these moments of weakness. He'd stop panicking at every movement, stop being paranoid every time he stepped outside. He didn't need Techno's help. He wasn't about to get all mushy with him, because it was fine. Tommy could deal on his own.

Oddly enough, Techno's dog followed him in, Johnathan clutched gently in her mouth. Tommy didn't really want to deal with a puppy, but he guessed he didn't have much of an option, not with Susan dropping the little guy right in the middle of his bed.

"If you shit everywhere I am going to toss you into the snow," Tommy grumbled, grabbing an old notebook and ripping out a few pages, laying them on the ground before pointing at it. "You either whine until someone else gets you or go there. Got it?"

Susan stared at him with unimpressed eyes. Leave it to Techno to get an annoyingly intelligent dog. Johnathan just rolled over in his sleep.

Tommy slumped, walking over to his bed and lying down, carefully manoeuvring the puppy until they were curled up beside each other. Susan came closer, sitting down and nudging at his hand, gently licking it. The texture was gross, so Tommy moved his hand to gently scratch behind her ears.

“You’re a good dog,” Tommy muttered, and she nuzzled his hand gently. “Not worth the panic attack I had while he was getting you though.”

Tommy felt her huff of hot air hit his hand, and she stared up at him with sad eyes. He laughed, closing his eyes and feeling the waves of exhaustion hit him again. He was always tired these days, it was horrible. He just wanted to sleep forever.

“I’m so angry Susan,” He whispers to the dog, because no one else was around to hear him. Not even himself. “And if I’m not angry I’m just numb. I don’t feel safe, I never feel safe, and I don’t understand what’s going on.”

She headbutted his hand, a paw reaching up to hook around his arm as if she was petting him back. He felt a tear run down his cheek and felt ridiculous, lying in bed talking to a dog.

“I sometimes hope Dream will take me back,” He admits with a sigh. “Everything was simpler in exile. Sure it kind of sucked, but Dream cared I think. In his own twisted way. And I understood Dream’s care. I don’t get Techno’s. He makes no fucking sense. You’ll learn that soon enough Sues.”

Tommy let his hand drop, fingers brushing against the stone floor. He drags his nail down it, feeling the fragile tips crack and break. He thinks they might bleed if he keeps it up, but drags them down again. Susan leans forwards, gently taking his hand in her mouth, lifting it up and practically tossing it back onto the bed. What a stupidly helpful dog.

He curls up into himself, bringing up his other hand to pet Johnathan, the puppy leaning into his touch. He watches as Susan jumps onto the bottom of his bed, curling up against his feet.

He closes his eyes and lets himself drift off. Despite it all, he feels safe with both the dogs pressed against him, Techno and Phil upstairs keeping watch. He could sleep. Hopefully he wouldn’t wake up to Dream staring down at him. He dreams on Niki and fire, explosions happening around him as Tubbo stared at him with accusing eyes.

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There was something licking his face. He wanted it gone. He pushed at the fluffy face, but it did not give him a break, continuing to paw and lick at him until he opened his eyes, Susan standing above him with the closest thing the dog could give as a smile.

Behind her stood Phil, waving awkwardly, his wings twitching in the small space.

“Food,” He signed slowly, grinning in a way that showed that Techno spilled everything that happened and Phil was now going to treat him like some fragile little flower until Tommy snapped at him. Tommy didn’t want to eat, he wants to keep sleeping, but if his internal clock was right it was late at night and Techno wouldn’t let him get away with skipping every meal today.

The pig was strangely determined on the food front, no matter how much Tommy protested it. So even if his vision blurred and spun when he got to his feet he followed Phil up towards the kitchen. Techno was already there, standing at the counter with his apron on, frying what smelled like some eggs. Ghostbur waved from where he sat on the floor in the living room.

Tommy hated eggs. He much preferred simple things like carrots. He sat down either way, propping his head up with his hand, trying not to fall asleep. Johnathan seemed a lot more awake than before, running around the kitchen as fast as he could, bumping into everything in his way.

Tommy took to watching him instead of looking at his father and brother have a conversation he’ll never be able to understand. He was a cute puppy. Hopefully they could actually train him to do things, or else it would’ve been a waste of a trip. Tommy will get attached to it either way.

Techno places a plate down in front of him, two soft boiled eggs and a single carrot on the side. The height of delicacy. He picks up a fork, running it through the yolk and smearing it everywhere.

He doesn’t want to eat. He wasn’t hungry, hadn’t really been hungry in a very long time. He took his first bite and it tasted like nothing on his tongue, the soupy texture making him want to puke. He took a deep breath, ignoring the way his hands started to shake. He didn’t want to eat. He wanted to waste away until he was nothing. He picked up the carrot, because at least he knew that texture wouldn’t make him gag, but it was suspiciously soggy, the crunch he was looking for not as crisp. It stupidly made him frustrated enough that he wanted to cry.

He feels Susan walk under the table, pressing herself up against his legs, head tipping back to rest on his lap. Tommy let his other hand fall on her head, gently scratching behind her ears. He forced another forkful into his mouth.

He only managed to eat half the carrot and one of the eggs before he knew that if he forced himself to eat more he would either start screaming or puking, so he pushed the plate away, dropping his other hand to cup Susan’s face.

He sees someone tapping the table in front of him and reluctantly looked up, meeting Techno’s eyes.

“I have to go soon,” He signed, and Tommy sighed, nodding his head. “Phil is staying.”

That’ll be a first. Tommy just shrugs, eyes falling back down to Susan, who nuzzles his hand. He knows he should care, remembered caring so much earlier, the sting of being left behind again when Techno knew that Dream was around and hunting him, but he just couldn’t care anymore. It was a nice feeling, to not care. He’d like to stay there for a bit longer.

Techno and Phil move around the house and Tommy gets up to find Johnathan, seeing the pup chewing on the bottom of Techno's curtain. He looks like he's having fun so Tommy lets him be.

Techno's standing by the door, his winter gear on and armour shining in the firelight. Susan is sitting by his side, and Tommy realizes that she must be going with him too. He'd weirdly disappointed about that.

Techno's pauses by the door, looking back at Tommy and shifting from foot to foot awkwardly. Tommy raised an eyebrow, clearly unimpressed with Techno's hesitance to whatever he wanted to do. Techno rolled his eyes and reached forwards, telegraphing his movements as he grabbed Tommy and pulled him into a hug.

Tommy tensed up, not returning it but allowing himself to melt into the comfort the tiniest bit. He can feel the same soothing rumble vibrate through him and it shouldn't help but it does, a soft warmth blossoming inside him. He reluctantly moves his hands up to awkwardly wrap around Techno's back.

The embrace is short, and Techno gently ruffles his hair when they pull back, stepping out the door, Tommy cheerfully swearing at his retreating form.

And then Phil and him were alone. Or not really because Ghostbur was still hovering in the corner with that sheep and Johnathan was still snacking on the curtain. Tommy had forgotten that Ghostbur was there with them, he didn't have to eat so he was probably sitting out here the entire time.

They all stand there awkwardly for a long moment, none of them knowing what to say. Or at least Phil and him didn't know what to say, Ghostbur seemed oblivious to the tension in the room, looking up and grinning at them. His hands moved up, quickly fingerspelling out a word.

"Bread?" Ghostbur signed, grinning widely and Tommy looked over to Phil, who looked just as confused. Phil started talking, but at the angle they were standing Tommy couldn't properly see what he was saying. He crossed his arms, looking back over to Johnathan until their conversation was done. He'd never get used to that, being blatantly left out of conversations.

He saw Phil waving at him and looked back over, his father grinning widely at him.

"Do you want to make bread?" Phil's sign was clunky and pretty much impossible to figure out, especially since he alternated between regular sign and finger spelling, but Tommy got the memo.

He figures they have nothing better to do, so he shrugs, Ghostbur's face lighting up as he clapped his hands together. They all migrated towards the kitchen, Phil pulling out the ingredients from around the place as Tommy sat on the counter, Ghostbur rambling into the air. Tommy couldn't tell what he was saying, so he just stared at the floor instead.

A few moments later Phil was dumping a bunch of supplies onto the counter beside him, pushing a bag full of flour and written instructions towards him. Tommy stared down at them blankly before realizing that Phil actually expected him to do work. Lame.

He pulls out the measuring cups, carefully dumping the right amount of flour into the bowl, Phil getting the water and other ingredients ready. Ghostbur floated around them, dragging his sheep everywhere he went, pointing at thigs and talking animatedly, sometimes remembering to try and fingerspell things out. It didn't help but Tommy guesses that he can't always win.

Pretty soon they had a decent dough going, and Phil instructed Tommy to do all the kneading. Tommy normally found it horribly boring, he used to go around to the bakery to help Niki out but mostly just bothered her, but now it was nice.

It was good to have a nice monotonous activity to do, his mind already exhausted and starting to drift. Kneading some bread didn't require a lot of thought, he could just sit there and work the dough and try not to fall asleep where he stood. Phil made a point to sign out some cheesy encouragements that Tommy would half heartedly respond to, not really up for his usual banter. Phil never seemed to mind, even if his smile turned a bit sad.

They leave the dough to rest, Tommy and Phil going outside to let Johnathan use the washroom and Tommy pretends that he was shivering due to the cold, not because being outside triggered his massive paranoia that any second Dream would come out of the woodworks and steal him away.

They didn't wait for long, Johnathan doing his business and running up to them seconds later. They returned back to find the bread dyed dark blue, Ghostbur hiding blue stained hands behind his back. Tommy's only half sure that the dye was actually edible.

They continued either way, Tommy retiring to the living room as Phil plopped the dough into the oven. He wrapped a blanket around himself, Johnathan climbing into his lap and snuggling closer to him. The puppy slept a lot, but so did he so he couldn't complain.

Tommy really wanted to sleep, but he knew he wouldn't be able to until Techno got home. There was a voice whispering in the back of his head, telling him all the worst-case scenarios. He felt like if he closed his eyes Phil would be gone and Dream would be back and Tommy would have to climb back into that small box and try not to scream.

He wants to make sure it really is safe, that this wasn't just some incredibly vivid dream. He just wanted to make sure Techno wasn't lying to him. Phil comes out a few minutes later, standing in the doorway watching him.

"You should sleep," he signed, and Tommy shrugged.

"Not tired," He lied, even if he was sure his voice was slurring slightly and he was struggling to keep his eyes open. He just wanted to be pulled under the blanket of sleep once again, to fall into the darkness of his dreams. But he needs to stay up, needs to wait for Techno to be home.



Phil stares at him for a long moment before disappearing again, and Tommy tries not to be disappointed by it. He really needs to stop expecting things from Phil. He learned a very long time ago that Phil will just do things. He doesn't need a reason other than he could.

Then Phil was walking back into the room, a spool of yarn in one hand and two knitting needles in his other hand. He smiled at Tommy, placing the blue wool on his lap. Tommy thinks that it's probably from that blue sheep Ghostbur totes around.

Phil hands him a note, Tommy scanning the words quickly.

*Wilbur mentioned in a letter that you took up sewing and knitting a while ago. I figured it's a good way to pass the time while we wait.*

It was a very good way to pass time. Tommy had taken up sewing before the first war, helping Niki make all their uniforms and their flag. It had been useful in actual wartime, because stitching up skin wasn't that different from stitching closed a rip on a shirt.

Knitting came in Pogtopia. Tommy was endlessly bored, and even when grinding for materials daily it left him with a lot of free time. Knitting was a good way to remedy that. It helped Tommy with how well he could control his hands. Techno and Wilbur had found sloppily made hats and scarves littering Pogtopia for days.

Tommy starts the mindless task without a thought, carefully starting a row of stitches. Maybe he'd try to make Ghostbur a sweater, since he liked that stupid sheep so much. It's easy to get lost in the stitches the same way he got lost in making the bread, letting his mind mostly shut off as he went through the motions. Phil sat beside him, not saying a thing as they waited together.

Tommy isn't sure how long it takes, but eventually the door opens and Techno walks through, Susan following at his feet. Tommy intended to get up and greet him, but he sways dangerously when he does so, ending up getting gently pushed back onto the couch by Phil's gentle touch.

Techno and Phil exchange a few words and Tommy sits there, fighting to stay awake even as sleep tugs on his mind. Techno walks over to him moments later, and Tommy doesn't even have time to protest before his brother is picking him up.

Tommy lets out a whine, a few swears falling from his mouth and he feels Techno's rumbling laugh under him. The vibrations are soothing and Tommy nestles further into Techno's arms. He was tired, he got a free pass on being clingy. He almost died like three times in the past two days.

Techno carries him downstairs and Tommy melts into the warmth of his arm, his eyes feeling heavy as Techno set him down on his bed, Tommy grabbing at the blanket and pulling it up.

He falls asleep moments later, his brothers' fingers running through his hair.

I'm in the middle of a super intense class right now but I have never written this much so fast. I've been plotting and writing tons for this story, getting lots written for my new Selkie story, and I even have a new story (hopefully?) coming out soon about Tommy and Ranboo being raised in a lab that's already like, 20k words lol. It's great! It's moments like these when I remember how much I love writing.

Anyways hope you're all having a wonderful pride month so far!! Make sure to drink lots of water, eat some food, take your meds if you have any, and get some sleep :)

## End Notes

thank you for reading! I hope you guys enjoyed and feel free to leave a comment telling me what you think :)

Works inspired by this one

[Lost in my head](#) by [ColorNS](#)

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